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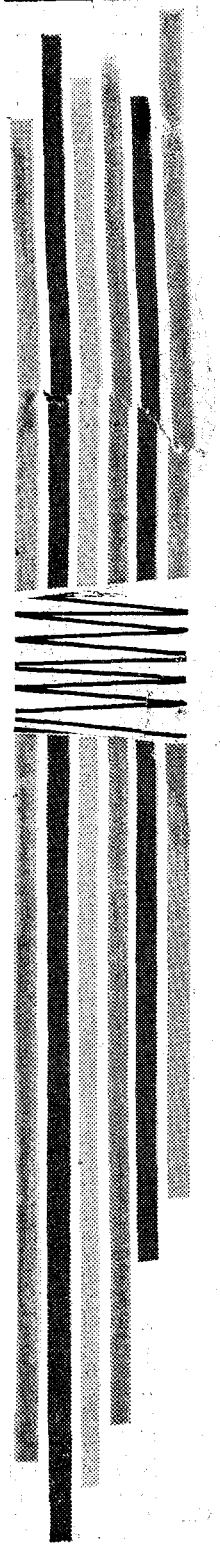

FEDERAL NARCOTICS CZAR

Zeal Without Insight

Stanley Meisler

MADISON AVENUE SCRAMBLES FOR HONOR

Roy Bongartz

WHO HATES CHESSMAN?

A Study of the Governor's Mail

Richard Meister

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LETTERS

Politics of Peace

Dear Sirs: In your leading editorial of February 6 ["The Candidates and a Politics of Peace"], I believe you have assessed correctly the temper of the American people. They will judge the candidates in 1960 in terms of their feelings about each one's capacity to lead the nation toward peace. For too many years our candidates and our campaigns have been dominated by what we were *against*. This time I think the people will want to know what we are *for*.

Before we worry ourselves about Communist intentions, we ought to give a little more thought to our own intentions. Our intentions are measured not only by warm-hearted speeches at Christmas-tree ceremonies, but also by cold, round numbers in budget documents and appropriation acts. Instead of criticizing the so-called missile gap, we ought to be criticizing the budget for its *moral* gap. We all know deep in our hearts that we can afford what we *want* to afford. If we want to afford an all-out war against man's ancient enemies of disease, hunger, poverty and illiteracy, we know how to win such a war, and we can mobilize the resources to do it if we have the will.

I think the people want candidates who show such a will. Our capacity for working out peaceful solutions to our disputes is not so well established. Whether or not *The Nation* judges the candidates on the peace issue, the nation will.

BYRON L. JOHNSON
Member of Congress
(2nd Dist., Colo).

Washington, D.C.

Dear Sirs: I am in general agreement with the views expressed in your editorial, "The Candidates and a Politics of Peace," although I think the paragraph on civil rights is not factually correct because there *has* been a strong group in the Democratic Party (actually, a majority) which has *not* played politics on civil rights and has consistently worked for legislation. Further, the editorial does not point out that there is a coalition of Southern Democrats and Republicans which *has* played politics and has kept us from making solid progress. This time I hope we have them beaten.

In the section in which the problem of Mr. Nixon and peace is discussed, I think you fail to grasp the importance of the effort to create a false image to the public — an effort which is well financed, well planned and subtly executed. Therefore, effective efforts must be made to destroy the image, and to create a more truthful or more objective one.

It is easy to say that the issue is peace —but the attempt is to make Mr. Nixon and peace synonymous. For *The Nation* and any others who really don't want Mr. Nixon, I think your other editorial in the same issue, "The Rogers Smoke Screen," should be sound reason for such a position. It is my feeling there is a real need now to begin showing the way as to how the true public image can be created.

JAMES ROOSEVELT
Member of Congress
(26th Dist., Calif.)

Washington, D.C.

Dear Sirs: *The Nation* is among the first-class American publications. For this reason, it is particularly unfortunate that a fundamental error has appeared in a number of editorials of recent issues. This error is easily identified from a quotation from the lead editorial of your February 6 issue: "The issue, we repeat, is peace." Peace is not an issue. Neither is it a policy nor a program. It is a goal, but like happiness, it is a goal which cannot be made the object of a direct search. . . .

Peace is not an issue since everyone desires it. Wars are fought only because people become convinced that the result of the war is worth the sacrifice. . . . If Americans valued peace more highly than they valued anything else, it has always been theirs for the asking. In the past, the price for obtaining it without fighting has been chains and slavery. At that price it can be had today. Whether they are right or not, it is quite plain that Americans do not want peace that desperately, and it will be a sad day for a proud people if they ever do.

The real issue is the *means* to peace. Peace is not a policy; it is a *result* of a policy. It is the result of a political philosophy enforced upon the weaker by the stronger, or the result of a shared political philosophy entered into on a voluntary basis. Until this is understood, we will continue to be besieged with meaningless slogans like "Pray For Peace" and "Universal Disarmament," which create the psychology of Munich and which invariably have paved the way to disaster.

JUSTIN BLACKWELDER

Washington, D.C.

Monstrous by Design

Dear Sirs: *Perhaps* those assembled at the "architectural" meeting described so vividly by Walter McQuade (*The Nation*, Jan. 30) deserved to get more than brandy and the feeling of impotence induced by the discussion: after all, they paid $12.50 admission. The business of excluding the common people from hearing what Walter Gropius has to say

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NEW YORK, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1960
VOLUME 190, No. 8

THE NATION

EDITORIALS

The News Behind the Headlines

A public preoccupied with the elaborate month-long press coverage of the murder trial of Dr. R. Bernard Finch and Miss Carole Tregoff, and the story-book romance of Miss Gamble Benedict, would hardly suspect: (1) that the Administration is sharply divided on key policies involved in the Geneva test-ban talks; (2) that the faction which has talked longest and loudest about the so-called "big hole" theory, namely the AEC and the Defense Department, is "openly and frankly stating" (Washington *Post*) that nuclear tests must be resumed; (3) that at the last day's session at Geneva in December, the Russian and British delegates pleaded with the United States delegation to issue a joint report; (4) that the Soviet delegation, subsequent to Premier Khrushchev's visit in September, made significant concessions (for example, after months of refusal, the Soviet delegates agreed to hold a scientific conference with the United States and British scientists on the problem of detecting underground tests); (5) that in direct contradiction of statements issued by Chairman John A. McCone and Commissioner John F. Floberg of the AEC, the Soviet scientists — this on the authority of Dr. James B. Fisk who heads the American delegation — did in fact make "good contributions" to the discussions; (6) that the American delegates, as a matter of political policy, and on instruction, feigned an unawareness at the discussions of new methods of detecting low-yield underground tests; (7) that while it may be possible to reduce the tremors from an underground explosion by a factor of 300 if the hole is large enough — the so-called "big hole" theory — the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey reports that a "well-placed and well-chosen array" of seismic detectors with filters to reduce the background "noise" would enhance detection capability by a factor of 100 or more.

In the meantime, we are proceeding with preparations to resume tests in Nevada; the weapons have been readied, the tunnels have been dug. Additional tests will only speed the process, already well advanced, by which nuclear arms will become conventional arms. And if the Administration's proposal to make nuclear weapons available to our NATO allies is approved, the conventionalization of nuclear weapons will be universal. Once that point is reached there will be little chance of securing an agreement to suspend tests.

Under the circumstances, therefore, the press would be performing a public service if it were to emphasize the importance of the test-suspension negotiations and throw some light on the double-dealing and in-fighting that is going on behind the scenes in Washington in relation to these talks. Headlines on murder trials and society scandals can wait; there's never any lack of either.

Schizophrenic Industrialists

American industry continues to spawn new social types — witness the emergence of the hybrid capitalist-socialist type in the post-Korean, or accelerated amortization, era. Currently the commercial airlines are concerned about reports that the Soviet and British governments are preparing to subsidize the development of 2,000-mile-an-hour airliners. "If this happens," warns James R. Durfee, chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board, "the favored position enjoyed by American civil aircraft manufacturers might be lost for decades." The thought that it might happen confirms "the worst fears" of Senator Warren Magnusson, who with Senator Jackson represents the Boeing constituency, that "America's leadership in commercial and cargo jet planes is in grave jeopardy." The commercial airlines could, of course, go in for supersonic planes without delay, but they need a little time to amortize heavy commitments in subsonic jets they are now building.

C. R. Smith, president of American Airlines, Inc., and the industry's most influential spokesman, has a solution for the problem: let Congress subsidize the research and development of supersonic commercial airliners. "Surely," he says, "we would not want to read that some other country has taken the lead in making supersonic transportation a reality." Here Mr. Smith speaks with the bland assurance of the free-enterprise industrialist turned socialist. But he is still enough of the old-style capitalist to couple this plea for subsidies with the poker-faced warning that federal regulation, particularly on "the amount of duplicating competition and the level of earnings allowed," poses a serious threat to the industry. But if the government is to finance the

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development of supersonic airliners for the socialist airlines, the capitalist airlines certainly ought not to object to a little regulation. After all, they are the same airlines.

The AEC's Can of Worms

A handful of alert citizens have given the Atomic Energy Commission its come-uppance on the matter of off-shore dumping of atomic wastes. Since 1946, the AEC has dumped some 45,000 drums of radioactive wastes into the sea. Now, ten years later, it has suddenly suspended further ocean dumping, indefinitely postponed a public hearing on the safety issue which had been demanded by a group of citizens in New Britain, Connecticut, and has requested additional funds from Congress to finance research into better storage methods. Why this sudden reversal of position? When *The Nation* first disclosed two related aspects of deep-sea dumping — "Test Case on Atomic Waste" by Gerald McCourt (August 1, 1959 — the New Britain story) and "'Hot' Dumping Off Boston," by Grace DesChamps (September 19, 1959) — the big guns of the AEC's public-relations staff boomed with self-righteous indignation and bold contradiction. But additional protests were soon voiced, including a sharp protest from the Mexican Government against dumping in the Gulf of Mexico. These protests were happily reenforced by Professor Auguste Piccard's statement — he is the inventor of the deep-diving bathyscaph — that "radioactive waste buried in the deep sea could contaminate the entire body of water around the globe."

Faced with mounting protests, the AEC now frankly admits that the drums which have been used are not indefinitely leak-proof under the great ocean pressures at 6,000 feet. A spokesman told *Newsweek*: "As things are today, we are holding a can of worms." And so they are — hot radioactive worms. But if it had not been for alert citizen groups, the dangers implicit in deep-sea disposal might not have been brought to public attention even after ten years of reckless dumping. The Lower Cape Committee on Radioactive Waste Disposal and New Britain's Committee on Radiation Information are entitled to high commendation for their resolute refusal to be overawed by the AEC. Now and then, Davids still manage to slay Goliaths.

Buster's Bluster

When, last December, Senator Stephen M. Young addressed Neil M. Wetterman, Americanism chairman of the Hamilton County (Cincinnati) Council of the American Legion as "Buster," we suggested editorially that the jig might be up for the Legion's witch hunt. Events of the last few weeks in Hollywood, where the voice of the Legion has often been mistaken for the voice of the people, if not the voice of God, show how the jig is going.

This time the man in the blue overseas cap is Martin B. McKneally, National Commander, and he is shooting off anathema at a terrifying rate. Stanley Kramer has hired Nedrick Young, who was once rude to the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and both Otto Preminger and Kirk Douglas have hired Dalton Trumbo, who was jailed by that committee. Paramount will distribute here *Chance Meeting*, a murder mystery made in England by a whole slew of movie people who were hounded out of their jobs in America. Mr. McKneally has protested every one of these deals and the picture people remain massively unconcerned.

How can this be possible? Granted that the worst of the Red hunt is over, doesn't the American Legion represent the will of millions of veterans, and isn't the rebuff of their most exalted leader going to cost Hollywood dear? The answer to both questions is no. The American Legion speaks with the voice of its executives and represents the will of its executives, and its mass base is as reliable as a bowl of marbles. Thousands of veterans don't even belong to the club; thousands more belong from inertia; not one in a thousand takes the publicized utterances of its leadership with the solemnity that the entertainment industry once accorded the "word." Of course, when the Legion echoes the shouts of the lynch mob, it seems to speak for the lynch mob; but at present the mob is largely dispersed and the producers of Hollywood are enjoying the remarkable American privilege of hiring whom they please without concern for the hollow blusterings of such as Messrs. Wetterman and McKneally.

Total *Apartheid*

A sweeping defense of the South African Nationalist policy of *apartheid* — enforced "apartness" of the different races — has just been written by Dr. Piet J. Meyer, chairman of the board of the South African Broadcasting Company. In his new book, *Further Journey*: *The Afrikaner in Africa*, Dr. Meyer calls for not only the strictest kind of *apartheid* in South Africa itself, but "extension" of the system throughout the continent. According to *The New York Times*, Dr. Meyer is bitter toward fellow South Africans who may hold some reservations about *apartheid*:

> He asserts that even without domestic intellectuals to contend with, South Africa's Afrikaners have a horde of enemies. He lists Soviet and Chinese communism, Indian imperialism, the Moslem world, Western European liberalism, American capitalist sentimentalism, and inflamed anti-white African animism.

Congratulations, Dr. Meyer! By your own reckoning you have achieved *apartheid* from practically everybody except John Kasper and maybe Orval Faubus.

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FEDERAL NARCOTICS CZAR . . *by Stanley Meisler*

IN THE world of U.S. Commissioner of Narcotics H. J. Anslinger, the drug addict is an "immoral, vicious, social leper," who cannot escape responsibility for his actions, who must feel the force of swift, impartial punishment. This world of Anslinger does not belong to him alone. Bequeathed to all of us, it vibrates within the consciousness of twentieth-century America. Anslinger, however, has been its guardian. As America's first and only Commissioner of Narcotics, he has spent much of his lifetime insuring that society stamp its retribution into the soul of the addict.

In his thirty years as Commissioner (Anslinger is now sixty-seven), he has listened to a chorus of steady praise. Admirers have described him as "the greatest living authority on the world narcotics traffic," a man who "deserves a medal of honor for his advanced thought," "one of the greatest men that ever lived," a public servant whose work "will insure his place in history with men such as Jenner, Pasteur, Semmelweiss, Walter Reed, Paul Ehrlich, and the host of other conquerers of scourges that have plagued the human race." But some discordant notes, especially in recent years, have broken through this chorus. Critics — mostly social workers, doctors, lawyers and judges — have cried, often out of their frustration, that Anslinger is a despot, a terrifier of doctors, a bureaucrat single-handedly preventing medicine from ministering to the sick, aimless addict.

These critical views reflect the philosophy expressed in *The Nation* in 1956 and 1957 by Alfred R. Lindesmith, Professor of Sociology at Indiana University. "The addict belongs in the hospital, not in the prison," Lindesmith wrote. "If we recognize that punishment cannot cure disease, if we want to take the profit out of the illicit traffic, we need to return the drug user to the care of the medical profession — the only profession equipped to deal with him" ("Traffic in Dope: Medical Problem," April 21, 1956). Lindesmith said the country's stringent narcotic laws stem from "conceptions of justice and penology which can only be adequately described as medieval and sadistic" ("Dope: Congress Encourages the Traffic," March 16, 1957).

Anslinger has replied to such critics with more scorn than argument. Confronted with a recent medical proposal to set up government clinics where doctors would treat addicts and, in some cases, allow them to continue their drug diet, the Commissioner announced: "The plan is so simple that only a simpleton could think it up." When this plan began earning support from influential men within the American Bar Association, the Commissioner answered their logic by telling a national radio audience: "Certainly the A.B.A. should have hired a lawyer to read the laws and find out what it is all about." Warming up to the debate in an issue of the FBI *Law Enforcement Bulletin*, he added his clinching argument: "Following the line of thinking of the 'clinic plan' advocates to a logical conclusion, there would be no objection to the state setting aside a building where on the first floor there would be a bar for alcoholics, on the second floor licensed prostitution, with the third floor set aside for sexual deviates and, crowning them all, on the top floor a drug-dispensing station for addicts."

A PENNSYLVANIA Dutchman, Harry J. Anslinger was born in Altoona on May 20, 1892. It was the era of unlimited traffic in narcotics. Cigarette smoking irritated public morals more than did opium eating (to shush their babies, mothers bought 750,000 bottles of opium-laced syrup a year). Drug manufacturers mixed laudanum, heroin and cocaine into their tonics and pain-killers. "The more you drink," one tonic advertised, "the more you want." The fashionable bought gold hypodermic needles, studded with diamonds.

By 1914, when Anslinger was a student at Pennsylvania State College, the New York *Sun* estimated that 4.45 per cent of the population was addicted to narcotics. "Cocaine and its allied intoxicants . . . ," the New York *World* said, "are seemingly cheaper than whiskey, cheaper than beer. . . ." Time and again, reformers lashed out at doctors for dispensing drugs too freely, for eliminating diagnosis as well as pain in the single stab of a needle. The magazines of the period coupled concern for addiction with concern for alcoholism, and the same forces that created Prohibition devised the Harrison Act of 1914, which clamped federal controls on narcotics use and sale for the first time.

DURING these years and the decade that followed, Anslinger's activities hardly touched the narcotics problem. At the start of World War I, he joined the Efficiency Board of the War Department's Ordnance Division and, by the close of the war, had advanced to the post of attaché in the American Legation at The Hague, Netherlands. He continued in foreign service until 1926, serving in consular posts at Hamburg, Germany; La Guaira, Venezuela; and Nassau, Bahamas.

As Consul in Nassau, he negotiated an agreement with Britain to halt a fleet of rum-running schooners heading for the high seas. The agreement plugged one hole in the defense against Prohibition smuggling, and the federal government soon promoted Anslinger to Washington as chief of the Division of Foreign Control in the Prohibition Bureau of the Treasury Department. Three years later, in 1929, he rose to Assistant Commissioner of Prohibition. Three months later, in early 1930, a scandal rocked his bureau.

In New York, a federal grand jury investigating narcotics, which then came under the jurisdiction of the Prohibition Bureau, accused narcotics agents of falsifying their reports on orders from superiors in Washington. The agents had padded their records by copying the New York police files. The padding, which amounted to 354 extra cases in 1929, had been done on orders from William C. Blanchard, Assistant Deputy

STANLEY MEISLER is a wire service newsman now stationed in Washington.

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Commissioner of Prohibition in Charge of Narcotics, who claimed he had acted on orders from his superior, Col. L. G. Nutt, the Deputy Commissioner. The grand jury said it found strong indications of collusion between federal narcotics officials and illegal sellers. The padding obviously had been intended to hide the bureau's poor record of arrests.

The Prohibition Bureau quickly reorganized itself. Nutt was demoted to field supervisor. Assistant Commissioner Anslinger, unassociated with narcotics and free of scandal, assumed Nutt's duties temporarily. Congress, however, decided that more than reorganization was needed and passed a bill transferring narcotics control from the Prohibition Bureau to a new Bureau of Narcotics in the Treasury Department. President Hoover signed the bill on June 14, 1930, and appointed Anslinger to the new position of Commissioner of Narcotics on August 12.

BY THEN, federal policy in narcotics had been set. The courts had approved the Constitutionality of the Harrison Act, and bureaucrats, fired by Prohibition zeal, had plucked from the medical profession any responsibility for treatment of the addicts who had lost their legal source of supply. Narcotics had become a police problem, not a medical one, and Anslinger accepted the task of making sure it stayed that way. Working tirelessly under four Presidents, never wavering from his early mission, he has succeeded. In the United States, unlike almost every other Western nation, narcotics remains a police problem.

Throughout his tenure, Anslinger has proclaimed that "strong laws, good enforcement, stiff sentences and a proper hospitalization program" are the weapons needed to destroy narcotics addiction. On its surface, this program seems intelligent and compassionate; it implies that sick men must be treated and that evil men, who prey on the sick by selling them drugs, must be punished.

But the Commissioner has a different concept in mind. He is less concerned with treating the addict than with removing the "leper" from society. In a recent article, he wrote: "It is essential . . . to remove the addict from circulation, either by a compulsory-treatment law or a law similar to that now in effect in the State of New Jersey." He then described the New Jersey law, under which "any person who uses a narcotic drug for any purpose other than treatment of sickness or injury . . . is an addict and may be sentenced to a year in jail." In *The Traffic in Narcotics* (1953), a book he wrote with former U.S. Attorney William F. Tompkins of New Jersey, Anslinger cites with approval a recommendation that any addict committed to an institution three times under a compulsory-hospitalization plan should be incarcerated there for life. This proposal has received the Commissioner's approval despite psychological evidence that a final cure for addiction is rarely obtained without several relapses.

It is also clear that under Anslinger's hospitalization program, treatment centers would be open only to addicts who had broken no laws other than those forbidding the use of drugs. The impoverished addict, who jimmied open cars and shops to steal enough to pay the fantastic prices for illegal drugs, would head for jail and the cruel, cold-turkey treatment. So would the miserable, addicted pusher, who sold capsules to other victims to support his own habit.

ALTHOUGH many critics deplore Anslinger's attitude toward the addict, few disparage his zealous efforts to wipe out the illegal traffic. One has described him as an honest, hard-working cop. In *Who Live in Shadow* (1959), a book written with Sara Harris, Chief Magistrate John M. Murtagh of New York takes time out from his attack on Anslinger to salute the Federal Bureau's "vigorous fight against smugglers." No matter how much they agitate for a change in government policy, critics do not want to return to the days when narcotics could be bought freely at the corner drugstore.

Yet Anslinger's police methods have disturbed some observers. Judge David Bazelon of the U. S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, for example, has attacked the Federal Bureau's dependence on informers. "It is notorious," he says in last year's *Anderson Jones* decision, "that the narcotics informer is often himself involved in the narcotics traffic and is often paid for his information in cash, narcotics, immunity from prosecution, or lenient punishment. . . . Under such stimulation it is to be expected that the informer will not infrequently reach for shadowy leads, or even seek to incriminate the innocent." In New York last March, U.S. District Judge Edward Weinfeld acquitted a defendant who had been enticed into addiction by an informer for the Bureau of Narcotics. The judge said the defendant's participation in the crime "was a creation of the productivity of law-enforcement officers."

Although the bureau has been untainted by any significant scandal in its thirty-year history, Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas A. Wadden, Jr., discovered in 1952 that a janitor had been stealing cocaine and marijuana from the Treasury Department's narcotics stocks and supplying them to peddlers in Washington. Anslinger reacted, according to Wadden, by obstructing the investigation. "While we were preparing our indictments," Wadden wrote in a *Saturday Evening Post* article, "Commissioner Anslinger made public statements which tended to disparage our claims. . . . The bureau could see no reason for all the fuss." Wadden attempted to link the janitor with some of the big traffickers in the capital, but, according to the prosecutor, Anslinger, accompanied by the press, personally led a siren-screeching raid that netted a host of small operators and upset Wadden's plans. The former Assistant U.S. Attorney wrote that he then dismissed pending indictments against three important operators, and an angry grand jury issued a report accusing the Bureau of Narcotics of negligence in the case.

Nevertheless, Anslinger's record as a law-enforcement officer may be far from a poor one. He has carried out the federal narcotics laws as honestly and effectively as possible, with no more scandal or disregard for rights than some of the country's

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best police forces have shown. But he has not been content with being an honest, hard-working cop. He has assumed the responsibility for influencing laws and policies as well as enforcing them. And, in this area, his methods have evoked severe and sometimes bitter criticism.

TO PROVE that stiff laws hold down addiction, the Commissioner has grown fond of displaying charts and statistics. His most frequently quoted statistic puts the total number of addicts in the United States at 60,000, perhaps 50,000. He bases this figure on the specific number of addicts reported to the bureau by police agencies throughout the country. As of Dec. 31, 1958, they had reported 46,266 addicts. He brushes aside any contention that many addicts have evaded the police. "Within two years," he said on NBC's *Monitor* radio show last July, "every addict, rich or poor, comes to our attention." Yet in 1954, a Citizen's Advisory Committee reported to the California Attorney General that there were 20,000 illegal addicts in California alone. At that time, the bureau had enumerated 893 addicts in California; its latest tabulation for the state stands at 6,214.

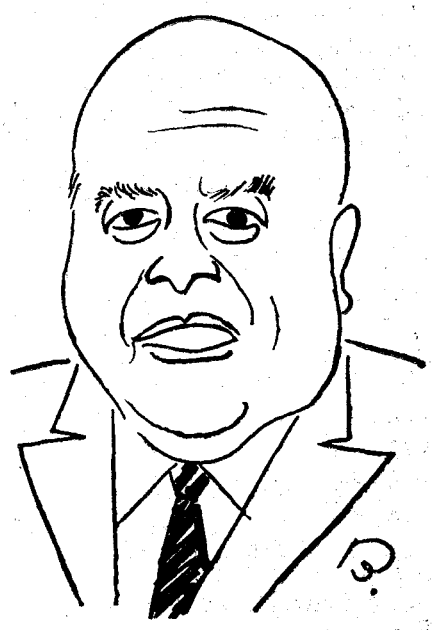
Anslinger's pet statistics involve the situation in Ohio. In his annual report for 1958, he prepared a chart entitled, "Results of Effective Legislation on Drug Addiction in Ohio." The chart, noting that the state had adopted its stiff narcotics law in September, 1955, employs graphic bars to show that although Ohio reported more than 300 new addicts in both 1954 and 1955, it reported fewer than one hundred in each of the three following years. In 1958, only thirty-eight were reported. "Continued rigid enforcement of the twenty-year minimum penalty for unlawful sale of narcotics provided in the narcotics law adopted by the Legislature of Ohio in 1955 has virtually eliminated the illicit narcotics traffic in that state," his report notes.

But another factor may have contributed to the dramatic drop in reported addiction: heavy penalties often discourage juries from convicting defendants. A survey of Missouri's experience sheds some light on the meaning of Ohio's statistics.

In recent years, Anslinger has been offering Missouri's statistics as further proof that long jail sentences do the job. In his 1958 report, he cites the "salutary effects" of heavy penalties and strict enforcement in that state. The House Appropriations Committee received a pictorial chart from him last year showing a giant human figure depicting the state's new addicts in 1956 and a dwarfish one depicting new addicts in 1958. Missouri itself, however, was not impressed. The legislature changed the state law a few months after Anslinger had handed the chart to the committee. The new law reduced the penalties for first conviction of possession of narcotics from a minimum two-year term with no probation to a maximum one-year term with probation permitted. "We found that juries simply would not send a man up for two years on the strength of a marijuana cigarette found in his possession," Circuit Attorney Thomas F. Eagleton of St. Louis explained. "It was also felt that a minor narcotics offender, convicted for the first time, was as much entitled to ask for probation as a first-time burglar."

After this scrambling of his neat statistics, Anslinger retaliated by cutting his force in Missouri from seven to three men. "Apparently they feel they haven't got a problem," Anslinger's assistant, Henry Giordano, said of the legislators. "We do have problems elsewhere and need men, so we're moving them."

THE Missouri incident marked the rare occasion when an agency of any government has questioned the authority or wisdom of Anslinger. Congress rarely questions either. While testifying on Capitol Hill, as he often does, the Commissioner has a persuasive manner. A stocky, completely bald man with a kind and genial face, he speaks smoothly and reasonably. In 1956, the reports of the House Subcommittee on Narcotics and the Senate Judiciary Committee leaned heavily on his philosophy. So did the report of the President's Interdepartmental Committee on Narcotics that year. The results were new federal laws so stringent that



Harry J. Anslinger

they set a two- to ten-year sentence for persons convicted of possessing narcotics for the first time, refused to allow suspended sentences and probation in many cases, and permitted the death penalty for any adult, addicted or not, who sold narcotics to anyone under eighteen.

While guiding Congress to one point of view, Anslinger also has helped generate an atmosphere which inhibits objective thinking on the subject. In 1958, the Joint Committee of the American Bar Association and the American Medical Association on Narcotic Drugs, impressed with how little is known about the addict and how little is done to cure him, issued a report that called for more research. In its most controversial section, the report suggested "that the possibilities of trying some such out-patient facility [where doctors would treat addicts and, in some cases, administer drugs to them] on a controlled experimental basis, should be explored." The committee hoped such a clinic would cut down crime by providing a legal source of drugs to addicts under treatment. Anslinger quickly organized his own Advisory Committee, which issued a 186-page report on the ABA-AMA report.

A remarkable document, cluttered with capital letters, boldface type, italics and exclamation marks, the Advisory Committee report uses every argument conceivable, even

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when they are contradictory, to belittle the ABA-AMA report. It is filled with repetitions, misquotations and scorn, and resembles a screech more than an argument. On several issues, Anslinger's group makes intelligent, critical points, but these are made so loudly they are hard to hear. The whole tenor of the document indicates Anslinger does not want to win the discussion as much as he wants to eliminate it.

This atmosphere apparently has persuaded the ABA-AMA committee to mark time and wait for Anslinger's retirement before trying to have its recommendations accepted either by its parent organization or by the federal government. Other critics of federal policy also believe that the retirement of Anslinger will herald a new era in government attitude toward addicts. "There is only one way to start reform," Chief Magistrate Murtagh writes, " — retire Commissioner Anslinger and replace him with a distinguished public-health administrator of vision and perception and, above all, heart." Will his retirement mean a new era?

Anslinger has not been a single force legislating and enforcing narcotics laws all by himself. He has reflected an imbedded American distaste toward people who have grown ill because of a seeming lack of will, and he has struck a responsive chord within both Congress and the public. Although persuasive and hard-working, he could never have pushed through his policies if they had not conformed with the public disposition. When he retires, it may be that a man of different attitudes and philosophy will take his place. But his successor also may be another Anslinger. After thirty years in office, there is enough public reverence for Anslinger to carry his philosophy, and all it represents, beyond his retirement.

Madison Avenue Scrambles for Honor.. *by Roy Bongartz*

THE ECONOMY of this world has been so rigged that while most Americans (and their dogs and cats) get plenty to eat and enough room to live in, other millions of them inhabit slums and shacks; and elsewhere, Asians and Africans starve to death (such poorly-cared-for folk as the Indo-Chinese have a life expectancy of just thirty-one years).

The economy of this world is so rigged that Americans can keep a mothball fleet of over a hundred freighters filled with rotting wheat because no one can think of anything else to do with it.

The economy is so rigged that great, shining, skyscraper banks and insurance companies are rising in every city, shrines to the dollar, while millions of Americans—many of them minorities not allowed to live anywhere else—live in ratty tenements nearby.

Instead of aiming to help the world live a little less painfully, the American economy makes as much junk as it possibly can and then uses it up, destroys it, as fast as possible. Nobody ever talks about that "third of a nation" any more; they're not supposed to be still there. Instead of Edgar Snow's "Point IV for America" (*The Nation*, May 12, 1956) proposal that would send food, medicine, clothing and education to Americans without them, we have "planned obsolescence" — more unneeded stuff to replace slightly used unneeded stuff. Listen to a Washington adman, one Belmont Ver Standig, urge his fellows to greater efforts: "Take electric refrigerators," he said the other day. "Millions of them are ten to fifteen years obsolete. But their owners don't know it. No one has bothered to tell them."

With our society on such a phony basis, it is not surprising to find its main spokesman, the advertising business, phony too—so phony it can't see itself as it is, so phony it is "honestly" phony. Thus admen greeted the quiz scandals and payola news and recent false-advertising accusations with confusion and dismay. "But we've always been phony," they protested. "You have to be, to sell stuff people don't need. Why suddenly make an issue of it? And it works, doesn't it? We're lubricating the economy, aren't we?"

It is hopeless to tell an adman that an economy that spends $117 million a year on dog food is at least in part a false and wrong and doomed economy. No one would be foolish enough even to try to communicate this fact to an adman. Nevertheless a number of people, including Earl W. Kintner, chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, have been attacking the natural product of this economy: false advertising. To require honesty in an area of necessity rooted in falseness is to demand the impossible, and it has brought a number of schizophrenic ripostes from admen trying both to fight back and at the same time to condemn their dishonest fellows (and, rarely, even themselves). Their confusion is perfectly understandable. They do not know—they cannot know and still remain admen—that their function in our rigged world is as shaky as the claim: "Money cheerfully refunded."

WITH THE hoots and catcalls from all the earlier scandals and drug and cigarette advertising complaints still in their ears, admen last month saw Kintner lower the boom on a variety of TV spot commercials: Palmolive Rapid Shave, Blue Bonnet margarine, Pepsodent toothpaste, and Alcoa wrap. The shaving cream was supposed to be helping a demonstrator shave sandpaper, but he was really shaving some sand off plexiglass. "Flavor gems" on the margarine were really glycerine. The toothpaste was used to wash away a dark spot made by a smoking machine; the FTC said it did not "actually prove that Pepsodent is

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effective in removing tobacco smoke stains from the teeth of all smokers." A fine fresh ham was shown wrapped in Alcoa while a competing foil, torn and tattered, ineffectually covered a dry, stale one as an announcer said they were both "wrapped and unwrapped the same number of times." Not true, said the FTC; they had never been wrapped at all, the hams had been picked for their looks, and Brand X foil had been torn and stomped upon.

KINTNER was greeted by admen with pained outrage. The Ted Bates agency, hit for both the shaving cream and margarine, asked him in a full-page ad in the *Times*:

> Is imaginative selling against the law? We are puzzled. Our clients are puzzled. Our attorneys are puzzled. We think businessmen everywhere are puzzled. . . . We know that people *don't* shave sandpaper, any more than they write with pens under water, shave peaches, or strap their wrist watches on the propellers of trans-Atlantic liners to find out if they are waterproof. We used this dramatization for a simple reason. Millions of Americans use a common phrase: "I have a sandpaper beard." It means a tough beard. Our phrasing comes under the heading of imaginative selling.

The makers of Blue Bonnet insisted that "the presence of the gems is an established fact" in spite of the FTC's statement that "the presence of visible moisture in butter and oleomargarine is undesirable and is sought to be avoided." As for Pepsodent, Fairfax M. Cone of Foote, Cone & Belding, cried innocently, "I don't understand it! The ad never said it would remove stains from all teeth." Alcoa said it could easily prove its wrap was the best.

These mild contretemps are only straws in the wind—a strong, cold wind of public and governmental suspicion blowing hard on admen's white-collared and blue-collared necks. Some few of them have become something less than sanguine about their own total righteousness. Richard E. Deems, executive vice president of Hearst Magazines, suggests advertisers avoid "the weasels, the unnecessary exaggerations, the double meanings, the sugar coatings, the crutch words . . . that in the past we have always felt were defendable tools of our profession."

James D. Woolf, a "creative consultant," says that "not since the fraudulent, patent-medicine days, which were largely responsible for the Pure Food and Drug Act, has advertising been sitting on such a hot seat." Referring to a Gallup poll showing that two out of three Americans believe TV commercials to be phony, he says, "The public is not as stupid as we are sometimes led to believe."

Truman Green, advertising director of the Tampa *Tribune* and Tampa *Times*, says: "Trickery and the 'fast buck' philosophy have replaced the old standards of honesty and truthfulness and fair dealing. Too many young people in advertising today are growing up in an atmosphere of flimflam and deception. Too many are being led to believe that anything is all right in advertising if they can get away with it."

Granville Hicks wrote in a recent *Saturday Review*:

> Probably the most careful students of the use of the language of misunderstanding are the writers of advertising. The purpose of most advertising is to create a false impression without telling the kind of downright lie that would get the advertiser in trouble with the government. Fortunately, this is so generally recognized that people discount advertising claims without having to think what they are doing, but there is a kind of residual confusion.

California Governor Edmund G. Brown alienated West Coast admen recently by saying, "Americans spend more on advertising, tobacco and alcohol than they do on education. We need help to free us from the hypnotic spell of the hucksters and the hard sell." More pernicious to the obsolescence-mongers are these words from the *Pilot*, a paper of the Boston Roman Catholic diocese: "Much advertising aims to create unhealthy demands and to promote vicious rivalry among people who might be satisfied with a more simple way of life."

Some admen have recently begun to sound like Russians reciting their *mea culpa* before purge: "A guilt complex and a sense of insecurity pervades every gathering of admen," writes Eugene Whitmore in *Southwest Advertising and Marketing*. "The typical ad convention reveals a vast amount of self-criticism, laceration and verbal punishment, almost to masochistic zeal."

Melvin S. Hattwick, advertising director of the Continental Oil Company, adds: "The agonizing self-appraisal through which all advertising people are now going is in all likelihood a good thing. It is unfortunate that the circumstances prompting such soul searching are in full view of the public. In due time, after admen have worn sackcloth and ashes as long as they see fit, many of them will go back to the business-as-usual routine."

One renegade goes so far as to suspect his colleagues of not being very bright. "We're loaded with creative people," says Anthony C. Chevins, senior vice president of Cunningham & Walsh. "Today everybody in advertising is creative. Every time a helpless little idea gets born, this battalion of creative experts pounces on it like a group of starving men in a lifeboat going after a careless sea gull. Never before have so many created so little. Never before have so many created so little that looks so much alike." Chevins adds that "the more creative people you put into a conference room the fewer good ideas are apt to come out. Meetings are for meatheads." As for brainstorming sessions: "A tempest in a think-pot."

THE ADMEN'S ramparts are nevertheless well defended. New York account executive Paul Slater claims that "today there is an almost emotional search —verging on reverence —for truth and dignity. Even the sophisticated façade of a goodly proportion of those in advertising hides, more often than not, an inborn respect for virtue. The growing emphasis on integrity isn't something that just blossomed. It's been at the core of things for a long time."

Fairfax M. Cone: "Almost all of these things that sound like cheating are nothing more than matters of photographic techniques."

Walter Weir, chairman of the executive committee of Donahue & Coe, says, "The FTC has not been

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attempting to correct abuses so much as it has been incorrectly abusing its privileges. When cellophane is rumpled to produce the sound of flames in a radio commercial for a fire insurance company, will that company and its ad agency have to live in dread of censure from the FTC because they didn't burn the studio down in the interests of truth?" (One might suggest they take out some insurance on the studio, just in case Kintner decides to take him up on that.) Weir asks also: "If a wedding is shown, must two people actually be joined together for all eternity in order to avoid misrepresentation?" (Why not? It might perk up some of those shows.) Weir is obviously a hard man to convince, but once sold, he'll act. "If there is inescapable, incontrovertible evidence that what we advocate is harmful or if we can advocate only by dissembling, then I feel we must in all conscience put away our pen." However, at last report his grip remained firm.

Joe Stone, copy-group head at J. Walter Thompson, credits advertising with enriching our culture. "Ads are reviewed where good men get together. 'Have you read any good ads lately?' now stands toe to toe with book talk." He may not be nearly so balmy as he sounds: station KTTV in Los Angeles (where else?) has been running an *all-commercial* half hour with a second-place rating in a seven-channel area. Station president Richard Moore says he hopes "the program will provide a definite answer to those who criticize the commercial content of television simply because it is commercial." In thirteen weeks he got 2,000 letters, many requesting favorite commercials.

ON THE last day of 1959, Attorney General William P. Rogers wrote in a report to the President: "Naked selfishness, rather than factors of public service, has all too often been the principal motivation for much of the matter that has been broadcast. . . . Consideration should be given to legislation which would extend the FTC's authority. . . ."

Kintner told an emergency meeting of the Association of National Advertisers on February 2 that they had either to regulate themselves or face government control.

The advertisers replied by handing around the meeting a mimeographed definition of honesty: "An advertisement is honest when *objective* facts which *bear upon* the product or service advertised fulfill in all *material* respects the *understanding* regarding them that is generated in *people* by the advertisement when observed in the way or ways that they *normally perceive* it." An asterisk after "honest" led to this note: "Honesty is referred to here in its objective rather than its moral sense." After this crystal-clear beginning, the advertisers produced a "Program of Action" featuring some phrases which would have delighted old Dr. Arbuthnot: "take such initiative as they deem necessary" and "this area should be reserved for individual self-regulation" and "offer its good offices" and "furtherance of mutual understanding" and "continued voluntary compliance with the law" and "appoint committees" and "establish machinery for continuing liaison" and "creation of better understanding of advertising's contribution to the economy."

Paul B. West, president of the advertisers' group, warned of the "danger that the economy could be seriously damaged if the credibility, believability and public acceptance of advertising is impaired." It's their "image" they're worried about, that's all. "Even though we're phony," they're saying, "believe us anyway because we keep the wheels turning."

With this new "image" firmly planted in our skulls, we'll be delighted to hear of the Skyjector which will project luminous advertising 1,000 yards wide upon clouds five miles up. On a recent cloudless night the developers of the Skyjector used the backside of a skyscraper instead of a cloud; the building management called the cops and made them cut it out. Of course, we really have no reason to worry about the Skyjector; its developers (some admen) assure us they do not intend "to throw pictures and messages indiscriminately in the clouds or atop a mountain. The Skyjector will protect the interest of the public and the advertising profession." So rest easy, you can always believe an adman. Look what they've done with television.

1960: Failure of Political Imagination . . *by Glenn Tinder*

This article, written by a teacher of political theory in the Department of Government, University of Massachusetts, complements "1960: Failure of Social Imagination," by James Reichley, which appeared in these columns on February 6. Taken together, the two articles may serve as guide-lines for the thoughtful voter soon to be buffeted by the winds of this year's Presidential campaign. — ED.

AS ONE watches the present efforts of Presidential aspirants and party chiefs to discover issues which will arouse voter interest and support, he may wonder whether the groping uncertainty of those who seek power, and the synthetic enthusiasm and frank disinterest of the masses who have power to bestow, are merely the phenomena an American must, every four years, expect to see. It may seem that the issues are more contrived and the lethargy of the onlookers more profound than is usual. Are we viewing expressions not merely of the expedient open-mindedness of the politician and of the sovereign detachment of the voter, but of a failure of political imagination?

Certainly on the one hand there is a widespread awareness of problems of a different order from those which were most pressing a generation ago.

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These do not lie simply in the dilemmas and terrors associated with great-power politics, but derive as well from a number of situations within the nation. For example, there are many signs of a growing fear that our cities are uncontrollably sweeping the people into vast, unstructured agglomerations little suited for truly human life. Statistics concerning juvenile delinquency are for many indicative of something seriously, but so far undefinably, wrong in the society as a whole. Few responsible people regard with very much pride or satisfaction American attainments and attitudes in the field of education. The recent television quiz scandals have provoked a good deal of somber reflection, even among those usually given to a kind of patriotic optimism, concerning the state both of our morality and our culture.

Yet no party program, and no Presidential candidate, leads us toward a comprehensive vision of our situation. We do not know how the various problems confronting us are related to one another. We do not know how these problems are related to those of the past. We do not know whether — if it is true that we are entering a new political age — there is a single, coherent program to guide us. As long as our present leaders, and those who are striving to replace them, do not help us to know these things, our politics is threatened with a deadly irrelevance.

THERE is a way of testing the validity of this sense of irrelevance. It is to compare the insights of what may be referred to as the "political mind" with those of "the literary mind." The former phrase is a way of designating the consciousness of those directly engaged in the pursuit of political ends, whether as candidates, party professionals, or amateur volunteers; the phrase "literary mind" refers to the mentality of those whose prime business is the discernment and communication of the truth (whether through fiction or otherwise) rather than the gaining of particular political goals. It may be assumed that in a healthy society the political and literary minds will not be in fundamental disaccord, and that where they are, the literary mind, by the very nature of the vocation it represents, is apt to be nearer the truth.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

"Here's to you!"

The comparison reveals an ominous chasm between the two minds. Notably, this chasm can be discerned in Western society generally, as well as in America. The central tenet of the Western political mind may be defined as the welfare — interpreted largely in economic terms — of the people as a whole. This definition of course subsumes a great many differences, some concerning the degree of economic well-being the masses have a right to expect, and others — even more pronounced — regarding the means appropriate for attaining it. But in most nations where meaningful popular elections are held, the paramount task of every political leader is to convince the electorate that his party is a more effective instrument than any other for protecting and improving the average man's standard of life. The most recent nation-wide elections in England, in Germany and in America all demonstrate the truth of this assertion. These elections show, too, that the conservative parties are little more inclined to ignore the standard of mass welfare than are their more egalitarian and reformist opponents. Even the "peace issue" appears to derive its meaning in some substantial measure from the material well-being which depends on peace for its enjoyment and enhancement.

It is not necessary at this point to attempt a definition of the central tenet of the contemporary literary mind. It is sufficient to draw attention to the certain fact that it is *not* the material welfare of the masses. Whether one considers the great novelists of the prewar decades (such as Wolfe, Fitzgerald and Lawrence), leading present-day writers of fiction (for example, Hemingway, Faulkner and Camus), American scholars and essayists (Huxley, Fromm, Riesman and others), or European philosophers (notably Jaspers, Heidegger and other existentialists), he becomes aware of important groups of authors to whom mass welfare is clearly not the great problem of our civilization. This is not to say that these writers are indifferent to the problem; nor is it to say that there are no exceptions (such as the early Dos Passos and George Orwell). And of course this near unanimity is only negative; modern writers are hardly at one in their positive analyses and prescriptions. But anyone familiar with the range of contemporary literature is constrained to recognize that the major concerns of the literary mind are very distant from those of the political.

IT IS interesting to note indications that this situation is not unique to the Western nations. Behind the iron curtain, where political heads do not readily bear with implicit challenges to the relevance of their vision, the tension between the political and literary minds has been at the source of some of the more poignant public dramas of our time. In Yugoslavia, Tito has for a number of years kept in prison his former friend Milovan Djilas, who tried to direct attention from the older version of class struggle to the dangers posed by a "new class." In Poland, intellectuals and writers have suffered from the drive of Gomulka and the ruling party to enforce the primacy, in relation to new insights and attitudes, of something nearer the old-fashioned Communist philosophy of mass welfare. And in the Soviet Union, the materialistic and egalitarian conceptions of the nation's leaders recently came into tragic collision with the very different kind of imagination which expressed itself in *Doctor Zhivago*.

The present discussion, however,

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is intended to refer primarily to the West and above all to America. Here, the discrepancy between the political and the literary imagination seems clear and it constitutes strong evidence of a serious failure on the part of the former. What is the cause of this failure?

THIS question obviously cannot be answered with precision and finality. It is not impossible, however, to offer certain hypotheses. The first is that *class* society is giving way to something essentially different—*mass* society. For a number of decades (and in some ways for a number of centuries), the root social fact has seemed to many to be the division of rich and poor, or, in more recent terminology, of bourgeoisie and proletariat. That this inequality has shaped fundamentally the imagination of reformers is evident in the Marxist doctrine of class warfare, in the Socialist passion for equality, and in the New Deal sensitivity to unfair privilege. That it has also affected profoundly, if less decisively, the imagination of conservatives is apparent in the attitudes of Disraeli and Bismarck. However, the situation is rapidly changing. The central fact has become the dominance of multitudes who among themselves are more or less equal and, in respect to economic circumstances, are more or less contented. Inequalities remain; but the chief characteristics of contemporary society are no longer set so much by the ruling temper of the upper classes as by the ruling temper of the masses.

Many will balk at relegating class conflict so definitely to the past. The continued existence of various forms of economic injustice will be cited; and one will be reminded that the most exhilarating heights of prosperity have in the past led abruptly to economic calamity. Nevertheless, the evidence that class society is passing is very compelling. It lies mainly in the fact, first, that the Western nations are producing quantities of wealth which are every year more incredibly vast, judged by the standards of every other society in the world's history; and, second, that the masses in these nations have the power, through ballot and market, to allocate this wealth roughly as they will. Although extremes of economic deprivation remain (and may plausibly be regarded as more insupportable now than ever before), we must grant these are experienced principally not by the great masses of people but by unfortunate minority groups; the more widespread economic injustices which continue in existence, such as medical insecurity, have to do with only certain aspects of life and do not, like the industrial conditions of a century ago, ordinarily degrade the entirety of the lives of those subject to them. As for the possibilities of another depression, it would manifestly be unduly complacent to assume that our expanding affluence can never fail; on the other hand, it would surely be unrealistic to suppose that the problem of economic cycles will remain forever unsolved or even that, in the foreseeable future, another depression as severe as that of 1929 will be tolerated.

These considerations of course are purposely confined to the prospects opened up by developments in the advanced industrial nations; in the underdeveloped countries, these prospects are not yet visible. And it may well be that even before the industrial nations there lie far more trying economic adversities than one is disposed, amid present opulence, to fear. But what does seem clear is that — barring a third world war — the great plunge into the joys of abundance which has recently been taken *en masse* by the peoples of Germany, of France, of England, and of America, heralds a new political age.

Confidence in the onset of this age, however, does not necessarily reflect an unqualified optimism. Most serious observers realize that mass society is a long way from the utopia which for many was the imagined sequel to class society and which advertisers and politicians often try to convince us we now enjoy. Indeed, many fear that while we have, in a sense, solved all of our problems, we are as far from our dreams as we ever were. What has gone wrong?

This brings us to the second hypothesis bearing on the present failure of political imagination, which is that mass society is accompanied by a state of disintegration far more subtle, but no less painful and no less humanly destructive, than that which was manifest in conflict between classes. To differentiate it from the latter, that is, from *class* disintegration, it may be called "*mass* disintegration." This new challenge to human society is not manifest in picket lines, in poverty, or in the bitterness of one group against another. Indeed, it may be most profound where much is made of the camaraderie of the "team" or of the warmth of "togetherness."

HOW, then, is it manifest? Chiefly in the isolation of the person. The circumstances which produce this isolation are various; among them are a mobility which often suddenly severs established relationships, the customary priority of organizational and commercial considerations over those which are merely human, and a rate of historical change which frequently renders members of different generations incomprehensible to one another. But mass disintegration does not affect relations among persons alone; it also attenuates the bonds between man and place, man and nature, man and his possessions. Thus the rootlessness of the contemporary individual is well known; the difficulty and infrequency of satisfactory contact with the natural world becomes plain if one reflects on the extent to which modern life is carried on both indoors and within cities; and as for the relations of a person to his possessions, the supposedly radical idea of collective ownership is merely in line with a process of capitalistic collectivization which, through such means as the joint stock company, planned obsolescence and installment buying, has for many decades been alienating man from his possessions. In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, one of the sons of Willy Loman says, ". . . It's what I always wanted. My own apartment, a car, and plenty of women. And still, goddamit, I'm lonely." This, as David Riesman establishes in *The Lonely Crowd*, might be taken as the cry of the twentieth-century American. It expresses the anguish of mass

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disintegration. The estrangement of classes from one another, and the burdens of poverty, are disappearing; but a new estrangement is felt, and its anxieties are not less real than those of an earlier age.

These hypotheses are in consonance with the fact that in all of the leading nations of the West dominant literary voices utter man's estrangement. Existentialism — the philosophy of estrangement — had its origin in Germany, and in France has been set forth in some of its most dramatic formulae. Much of the best-known Continental fiction produced during the past few decades voices the emotion which underlies existentialist philosophy: the individual's terror in the discovery of his absolute aloneness in the universe. In England, one of the most acclaimed of the postwar works for the theatre, John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, bespeaks harshly a feeling of alienation which is apparently shared by a number of England's young writers. In America, the works of David Riesman and Erich Fromm are only the most widely read of a number of books dealing with the destruction of man's organic relations with his fellow man and with the world. If there is any theme which gives unity to the contemporary literary mind, aside from its implicit rejection of the political emphasis on mass welfare, it is that of estrangement.

More important, in the context of this article, is that if we recognize that our age is witness to the advent of mass society, in company with its own distinctive forms of estrangement, the present failure of political imagination seems to be explained. The failure lies essentially in the fact that the political mind is committed to an obsolete image of social disintegration and has so far been incapable of understanding a less palpable, but at present far more dangerous, type of fragmentation. It appears to be not only the *literati* who sense the declining urgency of the old issues. In Germany, in France, in England, and to a degree in America, those parties (except for the Communists) which have in the past most strongly emphasized the evils of class disintegration and the values of equality, are without power and in a state of crisis, while parties more or less explicitly conservative have a tenure of office made disturbingly impregnable by the support of economically contented masses.

IT MAY of course be argued that in the very nature of things the political imagination as such cannot comprehend or deal with the inner crises of the soul and that human estrangement cannot properly be regarded as a political problem. From these propositions the inference might be drawn that we are entering a post-political era. It does not seem likely, however, that these arguments are valid. To be sure, some of the afflictions from which men suffer are "spiritual" and not "temporal," in that they are primarily inward and cannot be removed merely through those outward arrangements which are the province of the political. This does not imply, however, that the political mind is unconcerned with such afflictions or that political action is necessarily without bearing upon them. On the contrary, we are aware of a great many conditions in America, such as the inadequacy of our schools, the formlessness of our cities, and the irresponsibiliy of the mass-communications industries, which appear both to have some relation to mass disintegration and to be within the scope of political concern.

Thus it seems not only realistic, but imperative, to seek a renewal of political imagination. During the time that the political mind remains captive to the predicaments of a passing era and oblivious to the realities and dilemmas of mass society, one must recognize a certain fitness in the apathy of the ordinary voter. We cannot of course expect political candidates and party managers to formulate profound new social theories. But we are entitled to ask that the old ideas not be brought out in masquerade as the latest words of political wisdom. We are entitled also to ask that candidates for national office demonstrate (more convincingly than through euphemistic affirmations that we are "on the threshold of a new age") their cognizance of the fact that the problems of this generation are not those of the last nor, except in a very broad sense, those of any generation in history.

A STUDY OF THE GOVERNOR'S MAIL

WHO HATES CHESSMAN?.. *by Richard Meister*

Sacramento, Calif.

WHY CAPITAL punishment? You'll find a good part of the answer over there, in the six boxes under that table and the four more on the window sill. The boxes are filled with thousands of letters, postcards and telegrams, each carrying a plea — for life, or for death. The subject: Caryl Chessman, who in eleven and one-half years of struggle has managed to avoid six appointments in the gas chamber. The recipient, Governor Edmund G. Brown of California, who has the power to cancel any future appointments.

There's more in the letters than sentiment pro and con Chessman, however. The boxes marked "con" contain the same misinformation and prejudice, the same appeals to violence and vengeance, that have blocked abolition of the death penalty in all but a few states.

Legislators know better; they may have stacks of statistics and expert testimony indicating the futility of

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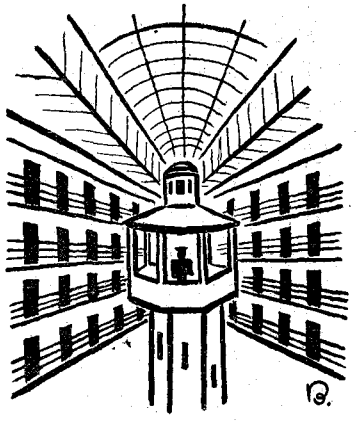
capital punishment. But the guide is public sentiment — or what's believed to be public sentiment. Except perhaps for associations of police officers and district attorneys, there's not a great deal of organized opposition to abolition. Yet there is belief by legislators on both sides of the issue that the public favors the death penalty. The press both reflects and reinforces this belief. And the Chessman case has only heightened it. In fact, one legislator who has sponsored several abolition bills says the existence of Chessman is one of the chief obstacles to abolition in California, a state otherwise quite advanced in penology.

The written pleas urging Governor Brown against exercising executive clemency to keep Chessman from the gas chamber indicate strong public sentiment for capital punishment. Roughly half the letters pouring into the Governor's office at the rate of several hundred a month are against the man in death row. In the average clemency case, the mail usually is overwhelmingly in favor of the condemned, but this is no normal clemency case. This is the case of Caryl Chessman, whose struggle has brought him to the attention of the great mass of people. Those usually too uninformed or too disinterested to write on such matters have been stirred into action ("This is the first letter of this kind I've ever written..."). And it is precisely the uninformed, by and large, who most violently oppose abolition of the death penalty.

MOST OF the anti-Chessman mail is from individuals rather than from organizations. Most — though by no means all — is couched in the language of the unlettered. Attached to many of the letters are newspaper clippings—editorial attacks on Chessman, oversimplified or misleading "news" stories, even comments from Hollywood gossip columnists.

This is not to say that the only organizations fighting *as organizations* against abolition are a few law-enforcement groups. That most civic groups, private lodges and the like support the death penalty is clear enough. For as one recent study noted, the arguments in favor "may only demonstrate man's ability to confuse tradition with proof, and his related ability to justify his established way of behaving" — abilities which are brought to full flower in the conventional civic group. Nevertheless, these organizations rarely speak collectively in the matter of capital punishment. Their function is rather to reinforce members' views and, in some cases, to stimulate them to individual action ("We discussed this in our club meeting, and..."). Besides which, law-enforcement groups don't have to write letters to governors; they lobby the legislatures — and with a high degree of success.

It's *against* capital punishment that the organization lies. But these



organizations—principally the American Civil Liberties Union and the Friends Committee on Legislation—lack what appeals to legislators above all else: numbers. True, petitions bearing *millions* of signatures, including some of the world's most prominent intellectuals, urge Governor Brown to commute Chessman's sentence. But many of the petition-signers don't vote in California and, anyway, "Anyone can sign on the dotted line, clip out the coupon, and mail it to the Governor," as one of Brown's aides explained.

There are many letters defending Chessman; unfortunately, it's not Chessman's case they argue, but the case against capital punishment. It may be difficult to separate the two, yet that's what the Governor must do. He must work with the law as it *now* stands—a law he opposes perhaps as much as his petitioners.

At any rate, it is clear that the Governor pays as little attention as possible to the letters, either pro or con. While no man is immune to such public pressure, Governor Brown, for all his missteps in handling *l'affaire Chessman,* is not one to countenance a Roman circus.

ALTHOUGH a look at some of the pro-Chessman letters might remind the Governor that some legal minds as sharp as his don't agree with him that there was a fair trial in this case, or that the trial produced convincing evidence of guilt, he has been told all this before. Nevertheless, as an opponent of capital punishment, he might find it valuable to dip into the letters to discover the appalling misinformation, the blatant prejudices and the tone of violence and vengeance of those who believe in the death penalty.

In this case, of course, the writers are inflamed because a sex offense is involved, and because there is present a factor unprecedented in the history of capital crime: an eleven-and-a-half-year delay. Swift and certain justice has again been thwarted, and the writers refuse to believe that the delay might indicate error by the state, whose infallibility in such matters is always blandly assumed. Rather they agree with what the newspapers have been saying all along: Chessman is an "evil genius" who unpatriotically refuses to submit to just retribution.

Several of the more literate anti-Chessman letters do cite the delay as proof of "our great respect for justice," but much of the mail is along these lines, scrawled across a postcard: "To allow a man to become something of a lawyer and survive on technicalities proves there is something wrong with the law." (The "technicalities" involve constitutional rights, including the right of appeal—which other writers assert is no more than a "legal angle" to keep the "obviously guilty" from their fate.) Some correspondents insist that arrest—even mere accusation—is enough to justify execution. Carried to its logical conclusion, the disregard for basic legal rights apparent in the anti-Chessman letters would result in lynch law. That's exactly what at least one writer had in mind. "If you let him go," he wrote, "give him a pardon so the public can reach him."

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Many writers don't understand the law. They assume, for instance, that rape is a capital crime in California, that courts have the power of clemency, that the Governor has no right to intervene once the courts have spoken (or that he can intervene only if a man has been found innocent by the courts!).

Worse, they evidence little grasp of the complex Chessman case—which may or may not be the fault of the press. Some letter-writers call Chessman a "murderer" (he killed nobody). One, who is willing to assume Chessman is innocent, says he should die anyway, because "he's a bad apple." This is the mildest of the descriptions applied to the man in death row. "One of the most dangerous sex maniacs in the country," "the worst criminal in the history of the state," are two others. Unknown or ignored is the testimony of psychiatrists who find it impossible to believe that Chessman, obviously not a sexual psychopath, could commit the crimes of which he has been convicted.

He's also called a "dirty kidnaper," although the "kidnaping" in this case involved taking girls from one auto to another and driving one girl a few miles.

RUNNING through the letters is the name of Mary Alice Meza, the unfortunate girl some newspapers say was driven insane because of sexual indignities forced upon her by Chessman, and who was sent to an asylum *"shortly afterward"* (at least, that's how some newspapers put it). Like the letter-writers and Chessman's zealous prosecutor, the news reports ignored the psychiatrists who pointed out that Miss Meza had been mentally ill for five years *before* she was attacked, was committed *twenty-one months* after the attack—and would have had to be committed, attack or no attack. Yet, in the letters, the pattern is clear: "[Chessman] sentenced that girl to a living death. . . ." And since 1948, Chessman's crimes have become magnified: "women have been beaten unmercifully" (there were no beatings involved); "*dozens* of innocent victims"; ". . . took *many* girls and raped them" (there were but two girls involved).

Yet informed or not, willing to sign their names or not, the writers are all certain that Chessman "must be given the works."

Even more disheartening than the disregard for legal rights is the disregard for human rights shown in begrudging Chessman even the most basic right, that of fighting for his own life.

It's no wonder, then, that opponents of capital punishment say the death sentence fosters a disrespect for human dignity and the worth of the individual, that it brutalizes society. Still not convinced? Try reading the letters referring to Chessman as "a financial burden on the taxpayers"—one signed by "twelve Californians, all college graduates."

The most blatant prejudices shine through the letters. "Chessman is a Jew, and Jews can get away with anything"; "We don't doubt that your Catholic leaders have brought pressure to bear upon you"; "This is just another victory for the civil-liberties groups, or Communists in other words—anyone backing Chessman is just that type, we Americans never win"; "He has an evil face."

The written pleas to "Give him the hot seat!" come naturally from a public partaking of a daily diet of glorified violence and retributive justice via the mass media, from a society in which being "right" justifies killing, on the battlefield as well as in the gas chamber.

The basic myth that shores up capital punishment is in these letters, too: "All the law-enforcement men with whom I have spoken say, 'Revoke the death penalty and a green light goes on for more crime'"; "Is it any wonder that crime continues to increase, when our youth can point to Chessman and say he got away with it?" Ignored is the mass of statistics which show that capital punishment has nowhere proved a deterrent to crime.

The letter-writers complain that "if [Chessman] didn't have money, he would have gotten it long ago." (Though in Chessman's case, he ran out of money some time ago; indeed, records show that most persons who go to the chair or gas chamber are penniless. Is this one reason why it is "respectable" to support capital punishment?) Even politics appears in the letters. "I'm a Democrat, but not if you pardon Chessman"; "Think it over, Governor Brown, election day is not far away"; "A detriment to your Presidential candidacy . . ."

Religion is brought to bear as well. "I am a Catholic," a woman wrote, "but I will never go to church again if he's commuted." A Baptist minister cited the Bible to justify capital punishment. Noting that, although innocent, Paul had lost his head, the writer asks, "Shall we have no laws because an innocent man lost his head?"

Certainly no one should doubt the sincerity underlying most of the pleas. But it's a sincerity based on prejudice, ignorance and baseless fears inflamed because one man, in his own words, has challenged society to "kill me if you can."

That's not really the challenge. The real challenge is to overcome the prejudice, ignorance and baseless fear which maintain the institution of capital punishment.

LETTERS

(*Continued from inside front cover*)

about questions that concern them costs a lot these days.

But why do problems of population density, building construction, water supply, heat service and waste removal get lumped together under the name "Design"? . . . The question of how to prevent the construction of more "Grand Central Cities" in overwhelming congested areas is a *political* one. All avenues by which "designers" approach it are dead ends. These people are grossly anti-political, anti-social. Quite rightly, Walter Gropius said, in explaining an aspect of the monstrous Grand Central building, "We cannot do otherwise." What fashionable fatalism — and how true!

ALAN MATHER

Detroit, Mich.

Castro's Cuba

Dear Sirs: I've just finished reading for the second time Mr. Taber's article on Castro. It is the best factual and informative story on Castro and Cuba that I have seen anywhere.

JULIUS MELTZER

Springfield, Mass.

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BOOKS and the ARTS

The God We Deserve

A MIRROR OF THE MINISTRY IN MODERN NOVELS. By Horton Davies. Oxford University Press. 211 pp. $3.75.

GOD'S IMAGE AND MAN'S IMAGINATION. By Erdman Harris. Charles Scribner's Sons. 236 pp. $3.50.

Gabriel Vahanian

"IF GOD did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him." At any rate, we have invented concepts which, considering that they are only substitutes, have done his job as best they could. One cannot normally expect a child to act as a mature trustee of any institution; one can much less expect a concept to substitute for a God who, by nature so to speak, eludes all attempts to describe him satisfactorily. Nor can one refrain from smiling at these attempts. Some of them would make you think God was your uncle; they would even prod you to act accordingly. After all, you would tend to think a rich uncle more benign than, and prefer him to, a father who is without illusion about you and knows your worth. Whether paternalistic or avuncular, most of our concepts of God show how worthless men can be.

Of necessity, these concepts are anthropomorphic. This is particularly the case when they originate in the inflationary imagination of sentimental or mass religiosity, or even when they explain the unfolding of a religious novel. But whatever the theological or philosophical connotations may be, this anthropomorphism often means nothing more than that we worship the God we deserve. We create God in our image or, as Mr. Harris says, "the believer phrases his understanding of the Divine in terms of the highest values he can conceive at the moment and within his particular frame of reference." And God becomes no more than the ideal man.

To be sure, glibness about this matter may show mere smartness; it is not necessarily enlightening. For this is a religious problem par excellence, since man everywhere is limited by the very words through which he seeks to transcend his limitations. In the Bible itself God is referred to as a shield, as one who is "mighty in battle" and "teaches" the soldier's hand to war. He is paternal, even maternal, a shepherd, a friend, a bridegroom, a husband.

Why is it, then, that the modern ways in which especially popular religiosity designates God should make us shudder? What is wrong with designations for God as a "Porter" or the "Fellow Upstairs"? Why are such expressions more objectionable than certain biblical ones which are no less down-to-earth and just as fragile?

In this reviewer's opinion, it is not the modern phrase which can (or must) be objected to so much as the understanding it expresses of the self and its relation to other selves and the world. By contrast with the biblical instances, these modern, popular appellations suggest only that the deity is viewed as a missing link in man's unsuccessful attempts to grasp the meaning of his self and of the world. For this reason, the deity becomes just a global hypothesis, a mere cog of an intricate machine, whether friendly or formidable. And thus the conception of God as the Cosmic Pal is but another development in the series of universal anthropocentrism. We drag God into everything and besot ourselves.

WHAT happens to man's concepts about God is described in Horton Davies' *A Mirror of the Ministry in Modern Novels* and Erdman Harris' *God's Image and Man's Imagination.* Professor Davies' work is a study of the various conceptions and roles of the minister or priest as seen through the imagination of fifteen novelists, among them Nathaniel Hawthorne, Sinclair Lewis, Somerset Maugham, James Gould Cozzens, Graham Greene, A. J. Cronin, François Mauriac, Georges Bernanos and Alan Paton. Mr. Davies conducts his analysis in terms of five categories which, roughly, also underlie the chronological development since Hawthorne. Conspicuously or not, the problem that recurs in each of the categories is that of the relation between Christianity and culture. These two spheres, at the time of Hawthorne, are related and interdependent. Afterwards, religion and culture go their separate ways, and the correlation of faith, knowledge and science constitutes the next problem in a series of clerical portraits described as "divines in doubt." Subsequently, the priests of Bernanos, Mauriac and Greene provide the sacerdotal approach to the problem. Here the dilemma between religion and culture seems evinced by the fact that these priests are not much concerned about their sacramental or liturgical obligations. The following category is that of the missionary, and corresponds to the age of global expansion during the nineteenth century. Ironically, the novel of (or about) this period did not provide any estimable character — on the contrary (everyone remembers Sadie Thompson). The last category is devoted to the present-day minister as community leader, wherever he has not been displaced by the psychiatrist, and specialization (the mark of the age) permits.

Mr. Davies' book is well written. A theologian, his attitude is not one of condescension toward the work and imagination of the novelist. He does wonder, however, why the Protestant minister, by and large, has not received as attractive a treatment as the Roman Catholic priest. Perhaps the reason is that for Protestantism every man is a priest or, to put it another way, religion is neither sacramentalism nor asceticism, but an acceptance of the world; and this often turns into unheroic worldliness. As James Street said, "Religion is nothing except humanity." The novelist, however, needs characters who stand out of common humanity in order to write about humanity.

IN *God's Image and Man's Imagination*, Mr. Harris proposes to examine man's search for a satisfying concept of God. Paraphrasing Socrates, he boldly asserts in his preface that "an unexamined faith is not worth having." But that, unfortunately, is the whole extent of the author's originality as well as boldness of thought. At least, the airman's conception of God as his Co-Pilot or the businessman's as his Partner, or even that of Somebody Up There Who Likes You have the advantage of being thoroughly prosaic, without any trace of speculation or high-sounding jargon. Sometimes they are colorful, too, if nothing else. By contrast, the style deployed by Mr. Harris is a little too philanthropic to avoid self-righteousness. Innumerable personal references finally atrophy the subject he proposes to treat. He wastes more words on private anecdotes and personal reminiscences than he spends on Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther and Calvin put together. Even

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worse is the fact that his references are mainly taken from secondary sources. The total effect is thus that of a potpourri of clichés on God's image and man's imagination.

These worn notions fail to do justice to the theme of Mr. Harris' book. His worthy intention was to compare today's pedestrian concepts of God with the biblical, medieval, Reformation, sectarian and other traditional concepts. In the process, more than anything else, we learn about the author's life and his preferences and that he writes "special" when he means "spatial" (p. 81), or that "from time to time, a pair of earnest, attractive people, a man and a woman, but not married, ring our doorbell to sell us copies of *The Watchtower*" (why *but*?).

Actually, what Mr. Harris has accomplished recalls Professor Davies' quotation from *The God-Seeker*, in which Sinclair Lewis has Black Wolf, an Oberlin-educated Indian, give his view of Christianity in these words: "Most of the whites believe, or profess to believe in Christianity, which is an idolatrous religion with many gods. Their Catholic sect has thousands of mysterious divine beings ruled by what they call the 'Trinity,' which consists of Father, Son, and Mother Mary. The Protestants have no Trinity, but a four-god council consisting of Father, Son, Holy Ghost, and Satan. . . . Among their demi-gods are Santa Claus, Luck (whom they worship by striking wood), saints, angels, seraphs, witches, fairies, vampires, evil spirits, the spirits of the dead, tombs and statues, the cross and a magic book called the Bible."

Ireland Made Him

J. M. SYNGE 1871-1909. By David H. Greene and Edward M. Stephens. The Macmillan Co. 321 pp. $6.95.

Russell A. Fraser

THE late nineteenth century, after generations of neglect and disuse and profanation in the theatre, finally produced the drama of Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw. It produced also, though his work in the theatre belongs entirely to the first decade of the present century, the drama of John Millington Synge, who is now for the first time the subject of an authoritative biography.

Four years after Synge's death, Maurice Bourgeois published a chronicle of his life and its relation to the Irish theatre. But since all of Synge's papers had passed into the hands of his brother Edward, who denied access to them, Bourgeois' book was necessarily an interim account. In 1939, the papers became the property of Synge's nephew, Edward M. Stephens, who for years had been gathering material on his uncle and writing recollections of him. But the full-scale biography which Stephens projected never appeared. When he died suddenly in 1955, he left nearly three-quarters of a million words in manuscript—more than any publisher cared to undertake, and concerned, disproportionately, with the history of Synge's family. That manuscript and the papers on which it rested were made available, by Stephens' wife, to Professor David Greene of New York University. The result, precisely fifty years after Synge's death, is a solid and immensely interesting biography.

Synge was a greater man than almost any of his contemporaries, of whom you are likely to read in the history books: Lloyd George and John D. Rockefeller and Admiral Dewey and Thomas Alva Edison. In the same year that Synge was born — 1871 — Orville Wright was born also. But the Wright brothers only created an airplane. John Synge recreated tragedy. He is the less dispensable.

Synge does not suggest, on the face of it, a latter-day Moses, leading the drama out of the desert. He is not, in his beginnings, anything like his great predecessors in the drama, the masters of the morality and mystery, or those Elizabethan playwrights whose excellence derives in part from what amounts almost to collaboration with the popular audience which applauded their plays. Great drama is deeply rooted in its time; in an important sense it is popular and social. But Synge, at least initially, was cut off from his time, a stranger to it, was if anything the antithesis of social. His family was Evangelical Protestant in a land of Roman Catholics. His early training reflected the embittered zeal of the minister who was his maternal grandfather, and who spent his whole career, as it were in the bush, fighting the barbarians of Catholic Cork. As he grew older, Synge added to his isolation himself. "By the time I was 16 or 17," he wrote, "I had renounced Christianity after a good deal of wobbling." In doing so, "I laid a chasm between my present and my past and between myself and my kindred and friends. Till I was 23 I never met or at least knew a man or woman who shared my opinions." There are terrible implications in those words, of loneliness and alienation.

SYNGE was also by birth a member of the Ascendancy class, one of the landed minority that exploited Ireland as a kind of imperial colony, and so incurred the hatred and resistance of the great mass of the people. That hatred culminated in violence in the years of

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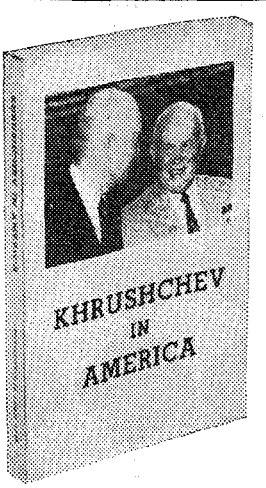

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Synge's youth, when the exploited tenants came together in a Land League, and resorted to a Land War against their oppressors. And so the countryside became a place of terror. Synge was implicated in the terror, but willy-nilly on the wrong side. The laconic cruelty of his brother Edward, who was occupied in driving the tenants of Mayo and Wicklow and Cavan from their farms, prompted him to argue with his mother about the injustice of the evictions. And his mother answered simply, "What would become of us if our tenants in Galway stopped paying their rents?" There is no answer to that question unless, like Charles Stuart Parnell, Synge's contemporary and fellow member of the Ascendancy class, you become as they say a traitor to your class, and make war against the source of your own income. But Synge, unlike Parnell, was no revolutionary. Later, in Paris, after hearing the anarchist Sebastian Fauré, he wrote in his diary, *"très interessant mais fou."* In 1892, when the Irish National Literary Society held its first meeting in Dublin, with Yeats and Maud Gonne as featured speakers, Synge was off in Wicklow for the summer, living in a boycotted house under police protection.

His apartness was compounded by his swarthy and singular appearance, by poor health, and by a morbidity which impelled him to make up his mind as a boy never to inflict his sickness on anybody else, and so never to marry. He was forbidden ordinary sports as too arduous. Walking was left to him, and so he became a great walker, which means, almost by definition, a solitary. He became enormously fond of music, but finally he gave up the violin and the notion of a career as a concert performer, because he was too shy to face an audience. This is how his mother saw him, still in his teens, and studying for a degree at Trinity College, Dublin: "He leads a queer solitary life, poor boy. He plays his fiddle a great deal and reads and takes a walk. I wonder what he will turn into by and by."

One should be able to predict what he would turn into: perhaps another Stephen Dedalus, a late nineteenth-century esthete, who turns his back on the life of his times — too crude, too coarse — who cultivates art but isn't able to create it, and who dies young and unfulfilled like Ezra Pound's Hugh Selwyn Mauberly, exhaling a kind of minor fragrance, the perfume of the *fin de siècle*. Synge, before his astonishing metamorphosis, was precisely such a man. His sweetheart reports him as writing to her, in the dedicated romantical way, "I feel there is that in me which will be of value to the world." But at the age of thirty, the value was represented by two reviews, a scattering of articles, a bad play and an unpublishable book. His work, in Yeats's words, was "full of that kind of morbidity that has its root in too much brooding over methods of expression, and ways of looking upon life, which come, not out of life but out of literature, images reflected from mirror to mirror."

But Synge, like Yeats, beat his way back to solid and substantial things. He learned to repudiate "twaddle" — his word—whether ascetic or aesthetic: Thomas à Kempis and J. K. Huysmans. "I will not deny my masculine existence nor rise, if I can, by facile abnegation. I despise the hermit and the monk and pity only the adulterer and the drunkard. There is one world of souls and no flesh and no devil." Like Yeats, he fashioned a past and a context. As a boy he had been immersed in the heroic legends of Ireland, before the wild geese fled. In college he had taken up the study of Irish antiquities. And then by degrees the past led him forward to the present. "Soon after I had relinquished the kingdom of God I began to take a real interest in the kingdom of Ireland . . . everything Irish became sacred."

THE result of his dedication to Ireland was six years of intense and marvelous activity in the theatre, between 1903 and 1909. In those few years, before cancer took him off, Synge created the two one-acters, *In the Shadow of the Glen* and *Riders to the Sea,* the partly comic, partly tragic plays, *The Well of the Saints* and *The Playboy of the Western World,* a single farce, *The Tinker's Wedding,* and the final unfinished tragedy, *Deirdre of the Sorrows.* These are all of them memorable plays; some of them are great plays. And their writing owes much to the patriotic impulse, in Synge and in his time, that had already found expression in the nationalist movement known as Young Ireland, and in the Gaelic scholarship of Sir Samuel Ferguson and Standish James O'Grady and, most impressive of all, in the establishing by Yeats and Lady Gregory of the Irish National Theatre Society.

But obviously something is missing to make really explicable the transformation of a failed esthete into a great dramatist. Mere antiquarianism never created a good play or good poem. The Irish revivalists, Mangan and Douglas Hyde and the early Yeats, are more to be praised for their pious intention than for the poetry they wrote. One might look, for confirmation, at the pseudo-Celtic verse of Yeats's first period, and then recall the careful nature of T. S. Eliot's remark that Yeats became universal as he became more Irish, but more Irish not in subject but rather in expression. It is the growth of a new expression in Yeats that matters. And new expression is the key to the sudden flaring up of genius in Synge.

YEATS, indirectly, conferred on Synge the gift of tongues. In the year before the Abbey Theatre was founded, he called Synge home from his fugitive life on the Continent. "I said, 'Give up Paris, you will never create anything by reading Racine, and Arthur Symons will always be a better critic of French literature. Go to the Arran Islands. Live there as if you were one of the people themselves; express a life that has never found expression.'" Synge went to Arran, "those gray islands, where men must reap with knives because of the stones." It is the crucial fact of his life. He lived among the people, listened to and remembered exotic and vivid ways of speech, became enamored of the personal and palpable and concrete. In the Preface to the *Playboy,* he confesses his debt: "I am glad to acknowledge how much I owe to the folk-imagination of these fine people"—"the country people of Ireland." That folk imagination, expressed in a prose that comes very close to poetry, is, it seems to me, the heart of Synge's greatness.

Here, from his experience on Arran, as recounted in Greene's biography, is the sort of data he seized on, to make over in his art: a mother's keening for her lost son, and the debate whether the clothing taken from a body that had been floating off the coast of Donegal belonged to the missing islander from Inishmaan; the fashioning of a coffin for the drowned man, out of boards that had been saved to make a coffin for an aged mother; omens and portents: a mother's glimpse of her dead son, riding a horse behind the man who was about to be drowned; and finally, this letter from a Gaelic-speaking friend:

> Johneen, Friend of My Heart. A million blessings to you. It's a while ago since I thought of a small letter to write, and every day was going until it went too far and the time I was about to write to you. It happened that my brother's wife, Shawneen, died. And she was visiting the last Sunday in December, and now isn't it a sad story to tell? But at the same time we have to be satisfied, because a person cannot live always.

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Out of this material, Synge created *Riders to the Sea*, perhaps the finest tragedy written in English since the Renaissance.

The same shift in interest that distinguishes that play—from the indefinite article to the definite, from *universalia ante rem* to the particular fact, the thing itself—lies behind and is indispensable to the flowering of the English drama. And as it marks the development of the trope, late in the ninth century, into something like a legitimate play, so it marks also, late in the nineteenth century, Synge's transition from a rootless and featureless "European," which is to say a cipher, a nothing, to a particular Irish-man of positive and particular identity, in short, to a great playwright. Like Yeats, as Sygne began to speak for Ireland, he began to speak for man.

Curtain of Ignorance

A SOVIET VIEW OF THE AMERICAN PAST. Edited by O. Lawrence Burnette, Jr. and William Converse Haygood. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin. 64 pp. $1.

AMERICAN TEACHING ABOUT RUSSIA. Edited by Cyril E. Black and John M. Thompson. Indiana University Press. 192 pp. $4.50.

Francis B. Randall

CAN ONE really *know* another country? The foremost foreign authority on America is probably Denis Brogan, and even he makes errors of interpretation, of "feel," which any knowledgeable American can pick up. Then how can the Russians hope to understand us across cultural barriers so much greater? And should we not be extremely modest in estimating our own grasp of a society as alien as Russia's?

Rather discouraging answers to these questions of international understanding are provided by two publications from the formerly isolationist Middle West. A group of scholars in Wisconsin has translated and annotated the article on American history in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, the standard compendium of knowledge for the Communist world. The article, published in Russia's year of crisis, 1956, is the handiest source of knowledge about American history for most educated Russians, who turn to their Encyclopedia far more often than we do to our declining *Britannica*.

It is not a very good article. It is much better than the Stalinist tirade that might have been produced in 1952 (Stalin is never mentioned by name; the euphemism at occasions like Yalta and Potsdam is "the Russian chief of state"), but that isn't saying much. The English language sources listed in the bibliography are mostly commendable—everything from John R. Commons on the labor movement to the *Congressional Record*. But one is jarred by the presence there of all of Herbert Aptheker, a Communist historian of Negro rebellion and repression, particularly when there is no listing of C. Vann Woodward, probably our most distinguished historian of the Reconstruction. There is a heavy emphasis on race and class warfare, and on our imperialist ventures (real and imagined). In short, nothing is surprising. The *Great Soviet Encyclopedia's* presentation of American history is a great improvement on Stalin's last Seven Mad Years, but when tested by decent standards, it is the usual Communist tripe.

Some cautions are in order. First, we cannot assume that so political a document as an encyclopedia article represents the best private knowledge of the Russian historians who wrote it. (They almost certainly left C. Vann Woodward out *because* they had read him!) Second, our real dispute with the Soviet encyclopedists is over the fundamentals of their religion, not over the details of their views of American history, which are remote consequences of their religion. Third, we might listen carefully to what the Russians say; every few pages they have an arguable point. For instance, the article questions the wisdom of our atom bombing of Japan. The Wisconsin annotators try to refute this by a reference to Henry Stimson's memoirs—rather too hasty a glossing over of what remains an international debate. Withal, it is clear that most Russians are not given the chance to gain a balanced knowledge of America.

SOME Russian experts at the University of Indiana and elsewhere discourage us in a different way. They have examined what is taught about Russia here in America: the thirteen graduate centers for Russian studies, college teaching on Russia as typified by the colleges in Indiana, and such scattered treatment of Russia as there is in the high schools. They do not bother with the question of whether our view of Russia is systematically distorted by ideological or cultural blinders; they are concerned with the amount and quality of our education in the Russian field, as judged by our accepted set of standards and values. On this basis they find that our graduate Russian institutes are doing well, considering that all were founded after World War II, and admiting that much basic work remains to be done. The authors of the survey wish that more psychologists, anthropologists and sociologists could be persuaded to enter the Russian area, and of course they think it would be nice if America's Russian scholars knew Russian better — to say nothing of Armenian and Uzbek!

But the graduate schools, which should be the capstone of a whole edifice of education in Russian studies, rest chiefly on the ground. Two special programs on Russia are now functioning in Indiana, but less than half the colleges of the state offer *any* Russian history, and many fewer provide courses in Russian language. Of 65,000 college students in Indiana, less than two per cent take even one Russian history course in the four-year period — and any teacher knows how little that can mean! To the authors, "this is an alarming situation." But this is intellectual wealth compared to the situation in the high schools, where, for obvious reasons, Russia is scarcely mentioned. To put it

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most hopelessly, the overwhelming majority of Americans draw their notions of Russia from the mass press, the mass magazines, radio and TV.

So, by and large, we and the Russians don't know each other. Now what? Our problems are very different. If communism of the classic type continues to degenerate in Russia for another few decades, Russia's American experts are apt to acquire a pretty fair knowledge of the United States by following their unfettered scholarly impulses. (*If!*) Then they would face our problem: what can one do to overcome the ignorance, apathy, inertia, and ultimately the stupidity of the masses, especially the masses that go to college? Phrased this way, the problem is intractable; no people as a whole has ever understood its own society, much less a foreign culture. But the standard liberal procedures — the application of more intelligence, energy and money—could multiply both the knowledge about Russia and those who possess that knowledge five or ten times on all school levels. This would be nothing compared to the vision of the Educated Society, but for practical purposes in the next generation, can we ask for more?

ART

Maurice Grosser

THE Smithsonian Institution of Washington, with its hodgpodge of historical mementos and ingenious gadgets, of natural history, ethnology and art collections in this and last century's taste, has always been one of my favorite museums. The Smithsonian is a huge enterprise. Its buildings on the Mall include the Museums of Arts and Industries, of Aviation and of Natural History, as well as two museums of fine arts, the Freer and the semi-independent National Gallery. Elsewhere in Washington there is a zoo. In Cambridge there is an astronomical observatory and in the Canal Zone, a tropical island. The Institution itself is the most important of our learned societies. It conducts scientific research, sends out expeditions to the lesser-known parts of the earth, and acts as a free distribution center for international exchange of scientific information. Its astonishing collections of oddities, art and marvels are only somewhat accidental accretions on what is basically a scientific foundation.

The story of the Institution's origin is like the plot of a Victorian novel. James Smithson, the founder, was English, a gentleman, and illegitimate. His father, a commoner who rose to become Knight of the Garter and Duke of Northumberland, was the husband of his mother's cousin. Not surprisingly, Smithson's mother gave birth to him in France, and it was under her name of Macie that he entered Oxford. The fortune he inherited came entirely from his mother's side of the family. Smithson's great passion was chemistry; he became fellow of the Royal Society, friend of Cavendish and Arago, spent most of his time abroad — apparently he had no love for English society — and died in Genoa in 1829. He never married. His considerable fortune he left to his nephew with the casual proviso that if the nephew died without children — which he did — the money was to go to the United States to found "an establishment for the increase & diffusion of Knowledge among men." The bequest, amounting to more than half a million dollars, was accepted by Congress only after much hesitation. The first plan — to use the bequest to found a university — was abandoned in favor of a foundation for scientific research and publication, complete with library and museum, and having all the financial and political advantages of being a ward of the federal government.

THE BOARD OF REGENTS' first meeting was in 1846. Only two years later the Smithsonian issued its famous *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley*, the first of its publications, was already providing grants and apparatus for outside scientific work, and was carrying on its own scientific investigations. A number of these, in geology, weather, fisheries, Indian ethnology, and so on, proved important enough to the government to warrant special subsidy, and have even given rise to special government bureaus. Congress began to supply funds for certain of its programs, and private benefactors began to add their donations of art as well as money to Smithson's original bequest. Since our government contains no department of fine arts, it was decided in court that the Smithsonian — which already possessed a small collection of paintings from the Smithson inheritance — was also a National Gallery of Art and the natural custodian of all bequests of art intended to form part of a national collection.

In 1855, the first of the Smithsonian buildings was erected, to house, among other things, Smithson's collection of minerals. It is a wonderful Romanesque pile (or Norman or Lombard or twelfth century, as you will) by the New York architect, James Renwick, Jr. With its dark red stone and nine towers, no two alike, it is, to my way of thinking, the finest piece of architecture in all Washington. In the early eighties the Arts and Industries Building was erected, in the exposition style of the time, to receive objects inherited from the Philadelphia Centennial. The Freer and National Galleries on the same side of the Mall, designed to hold the art collections left to the nation by Freer, Mellon, Widener and Kress, are too well known to speak of here. The Natural History Building across the way is somewhat earlier than these. Built in standard 1910 "Classical," it contains, in addition to its exhibits of natural history and ethnology, a collection of art both instructive and entertaining, but so inferior that the National Gallery will have nothing of it.

THESE pictures belong principally to the official American School of fifty years ago. Some, like Thomas Moran's huge mountain landscapes, or Childe Hassam's charming adaptations of Impressionism, stand up very well. But for the most part, time has not treated kindly these ladies at spinets and sweet Arab maidens in their elaborate frames. Even more dated are the story-telling pictures — George de Forest Brush's clammy-skinned Indians, lined up like Disney characters in a canoe, precariously hoping to spear a moose, or Puvis de Chevanne's mawkish idea of what went on in Fra Angelico's studio, called *Inspiration Chrétienne*.

The two specialties of the Natural History collection are the works of Abott Thayer and Albert P. Ryder (twenty-three pictures of the one and fifteen of the other), which serve to illustrate the two extremes of late nineteenth-century painting in America. Thayer, something of a New England Tiepolo, was a fine draftsman, with clean color and carefully considered tone relations, direct and unsentimental in his work. But his subject matter, limited to depiction of a sort of noble purity (calm-faced mothers and college girls got up as angels) is as impersonal as the engraving on a bank note, and the result is as cold as a fish. Ryder, much more famous today, was not cold at all. He was a wild Romantic with as subject all the Romantic commonplaces from *Flying Dutchmen* to *Dancing Dryads* and *Pegasus* (*departing*). But, to judge from the pictures here, he could neither paint nor draw. Apparently, his knowledge of painting methods was also faulty, for the pictures are so crevassed and darkened that it is impossible to

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tell what their color might have been. Despite the few somewhat better Ryders to be seen elsewhere, I suspect that it is entirely because of its poetic aspirations that his work has acquired the importance it is given today.

ALL THIS makes one regret that the Smithsonian's unique collection of Catlin's Indian pictures is not on view; they are incomparably more interesting. George Catlin was a self-taught painter from Pennsylvania, originally a lawyer, who spent from 1830 to 1836 in Indian country, doing portraits of Indians and landscapes of the plains. He considered his pictures as documentation, not as art, and he exhibited them, charging admission, in all the Eastern cities, and later in London and Paris. It was the first Wild West Show, with Indian costumes and weapons, more than 500 paintings of Indians, and live Indians brought along to do war whoops and dances. After some years of great success, Catlin fell into debt. A fellow American bought the pictures and shipped them home to Philadelphia. It is this collection, recovered from a cellar, which the Smithsonian possesses almost entire — 422 of the 517 paintings listed in Catlin's 1840 exhibition catalogue.

However great its value as ethnology, the collection is even more fascinating as painting. Catlin worked fast. He must have done three or four pictures a day, always — except in landscape — on the same size canvas and with the simplest of palettes: blue, yellow, vermilion, ochers and brown. He would sketch in the subject, usually a portrait head or a single figure — outlining it in brown on an already-prepared, neutral-tinted ground — and then go on to finish the head and as much of the figure and background as he had time for. Few sitters were allotted a second pose. He probably painted sitting down, sometimes even on the floor. The somewhat disturbing enlargements of hands or legs in some of the works seem much like distortions of proportion caused by looking up at the model. They were probably uncorrected because of the rush of work to be done. On the other hand, the fresh directness of the painting, and much of its power to communicate, come from the rapidity and spontaneity of its execution. The one picture with "studio finish" is much inferior to the others. The landscapes, fresh as they sometimes are in color, do not have the portraits' precise characterization and seem to have been painted from memory. But the portraits and figures are like nothing else I know. The calm beauty and intense presence of these faces are not to be found in the work of any of the other painters of Indians. Let us hope that, as part of the modernization program the Natural History Museum is now enjoying, the collection will eventually be put on show along with the handsome new Indian habitat groups. They are the one evidence we have that the "Noble Savage" of the eighteenth-century philosophers was not entirely a fiction.

ONE of the modernizations soon to be on view is a marvelous new swimming whale, a life-size model suspended overhead in the suavest of S-curve dives, almost too graceful to be thought of as a fellow mammal. My other particular favorite here (the unicycle, with rider seated inside the wheel; the transparent matron; the Wright brothers' airplane, and Washington's false teeth are in the Arts and Industries Building) is the display of money from the Island of Yap — immense stone disks, too heavy to be moved; a thoroughly stable monetary system whose basis of credit (like the early Spartans') was too ponderous ever to be stolen, lost or squandered.

MUSIC

Lester Trimble

THE YM-YWHA at 92nd Street in New York had a lively evening of chamber music last weekend, when it presented the third concert in Max Pollikoff's series, *Music In Our Time: 1900-1960.*

Pollikoff's enterprise, which has contributed more than any other to the contemporary part of New York's musical life, has grown very smooth in presentation over the past several years. It has become broader in scope, as well. The inclusion of works like Schönberg's *String* Quartet No. 2, a *scandale* from yesteryear, along with music fresh out of composers' workshops, adds an immensely useful historical perspective to the programs. One sees how mild some of these older pieces are when looked at over the shoulder; how eagerly the composers tried to break new paths, and in many cases, how tentative and imperfect their products were. The question of progress and revolution in art is cast into a different light when the work of an old revolutionist stands side-by-side with that of his revolutionary grandsons. The creation of music then shows itself as simply a fallible human endeavor, with success the exception, and "progress" the product of an almost pathetic struggle between men and materials. There have been few breakthroughs in the history of music. Most of the development has gone slowly, by inches, and every inch cost dearly.

It is in part the intense difficulty of the creative act, a certain gratuitousness about it, and the fact that, like the mountain, "it is there," which leads people to attempt it. There is also, I believe, an impulse to communicate, to say something which will strike resonances in other minds and psyches.

However, a certain amount of music written in the twentieth century does not fall under this description. It seems to have been done "at" the audience, or "on" them, rather than "to" them or "for" them. There is as yet no name for this music, but the quality which most consistently marks it is an apparent contempt for the audience. Morton Feldman, who contributed a piece entitled *Atlantis* to Max Pollikoff's program, is a composer of such music. He is a member of the coterie surrounding John Cage (who conducted the work), and seems to have subscribed to some of the ideas about chance and accident in music which are Cage's latest pseudo-musical preoccupation. His music is constructed so that many of the decisions (as to the notes which are to be played, for instance) are left to the performer. As I understand it, he indicates the ranges within which the performers are to make sounds at a given moment, and the quality of sounds they are to make. This can produce horrendous results, as it did a couple of years ago at the Cooper Union, when he set a whole orchestra to work on a sado-masochistic enterprise which upset my viscera for days, or it can by a happier accident bring forth quite tolerable sound.

Insofar as the actual sounds of *At-*

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lantis were concerned, I have no objection to make except that I don't think they add up to anything. Thanks to a refined group of executants, they were sometimes rather pretty, but I had heard them all before. Indeed, they remind me of my favorite spot in the Central Park zoo, a place half-way between the aviary and the building for lions, tigers and such, where you can hear a similar but much more interesting *mélange* of sounds any day in spring or summer. I would rather listen to them in their natural state than to watch a group of musicians trying to produce the same effect in white tie and tails.

The real clue to the spirit behind this music came in the forum session which follows each *Music In Our Time* concert. As is usual at the "Y", the members of the audience who stayed to learn about contemporary music from the lips of the composers were intelligent and deeply interested. The other composers on the panel were cooperative, and did their best to respond to a sincere desire to understand with a sincere desire to inform. But not Mr. Feldman. He went into an act which would have been confusing if one had not seen others of the kind. Many of the people present were musically trained; their questions could have been answered quite easily, and even in technical terms. But the composer did not want to answer. He wanted to play with the audience, to confuse and obfuscate. And as always happens when a group finds itself tantalized by a series of enigmas and seeming contradictions, its desire to solve the riddle rose to an ever higher pitch. In this instance, the game went on for almost an hour; it was the most skillful exhibition of audience manipulation I have ever witnessed.

This sort of thing is not good for contemporary music. Audiences may be more conservative or slow to respond than composers would like. But they are not one's enemy, nor are they little furry animals with whom one plays cat and mouse.

THE two other living composers represented on this program were Donald Erb, a young Clevelander, and William Mayer. They are both extremely gifted. Both Mr. Erb's *Music for Violin and Piano*, commissioned for this series and played by Mr. Pollikoff and pianist Douglas Nordli, and Mr. Mayer's *Fantasy for Piano*, were representative of what might be called a moderate twelve-tone approach, including a fair portion of non-serial writing. They were thoroughly communicative, the *Fantasy* being somewhat romantic and mood-inspired, and the Erb piece more devoted to strong, nuggetal ideas. As in the single other work I have heard by Mr. Erb, a *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, I was struck by a singular quality of "presence" in the music. His ideas have a kind of encapsuled vitality which arrests the attention and projects. I am not sure that the formal structure of the *Music for Violin and Piano* is as solid and functional as it might be. But that is a question which only other performances could answer.

Fail Safe

(*Fail Safe:* the term applies to military equipment designed so that its mal- or mis-function will not injure the operators; in other words, it applies to a weapon that is perfectly harmless if it doesn't kill someone.)

No matter how nimble your grandparents,
It bruises to learn to walk.

The man who nearly invented the wheel
Must have left his backside on the mountain.

A haywire poem can mangle, and the danger in painting
Is that the bad ones try to put your eye out.

Even the smartest lovers can say a Wrong Thing
That nags the dearest kiss. Or so it was.

But now the favorite catastrophes wear Esau's skin
To kid the President out of his blessing.

The heart bleeds, but ornamentally, like Madras.
You answer wrong, but win your neighbor's wife.

With a good press to buncoanalyze and cadilleujah,
It is possible to die without knowing whom you betray.

Heart, tailored heart,
A skeleton wears us, and we saunter.

SHELDON P. ZITNER

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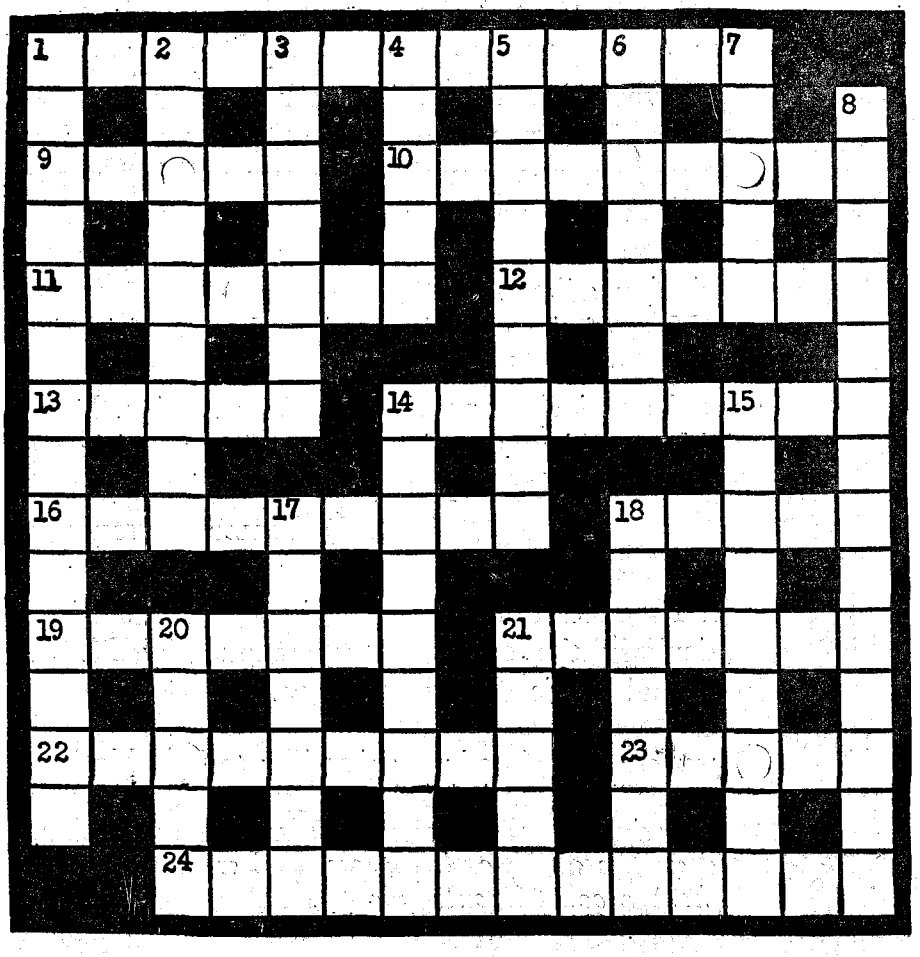
Crossword Puzzle No. 855

By FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS:

1 First impression of the supermarket organization? (5, 8)
9 With weapons, Nelson was one. (5)
10 This might be given rude linguistic form. (9)
11 Obviously, home came first and pressed close. (7)
12 Biting form of humor to the common man. (7)
13 On which old-time girders used to operate? (5)
14 One way to get the old coach into the barn, when not set in front. (9)
16 But Jack wouldn't necessarily be bright at such jobs. (9)
18 The shape of my other Homburg? (5)
19 Mobile state, according to two degrees. (7)
21 Stretch across, but take care after the automobile backs up! (7)
22 This might be easy as falling off. (9)
23 Formerly Mesopotamian. (5)
24 Recommended when hung over the shed covering, in part. (1, 4, 2, 3, 3)

DOWN:

1 Guernsey and Jersey are examples of them. (7, 7)
2 Made by those who own a form of advertising business? (9)
3 Outstanding examples, at least on the surface. (7)
4 Speakers don't like to be urged this way. (5)
5 One might confuse apes with a sort of 20 according to the back covers. (9)
6 However, as many as half-a-dozen go out in each one of them. (7)
7 A racket is kept in sort of one. (5)
8 Too many cooks, for example, exploit her comforter. (7-7)
14 One who makes a deal to lock up a fancy dive? (9)
15 Does a fair sort get mentioned above? (9)
17 Perhaps an old stamping ground of the 23. (7)
18 It's nonsense to irritate a church official with no work, in short. (7)
20 Nkrumah would consider it capital. (5)
21 Quiet little thing, but one is named the Continental. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 854

ACROSS: 8 Dress rehearsals; 9 Pogrom; 10 Transoms; 11 Odes; 13 Tantamount; 15 Asperse; 16 Vinegar; 19 Refreshing; 21 Styx; 22 Cerebrum; 24 Appian; 26 Attorney general. DOWN: 1 Arrondissements; 2 User; 3 Promotes; 4 Whiting; 5 and 25 Banana peel; 6 Asps; 7 Alimentary canal; 12 Spear; 14 Obeys; 17 Ingrates; 18 Dismays; 20 String; 23 Eros.

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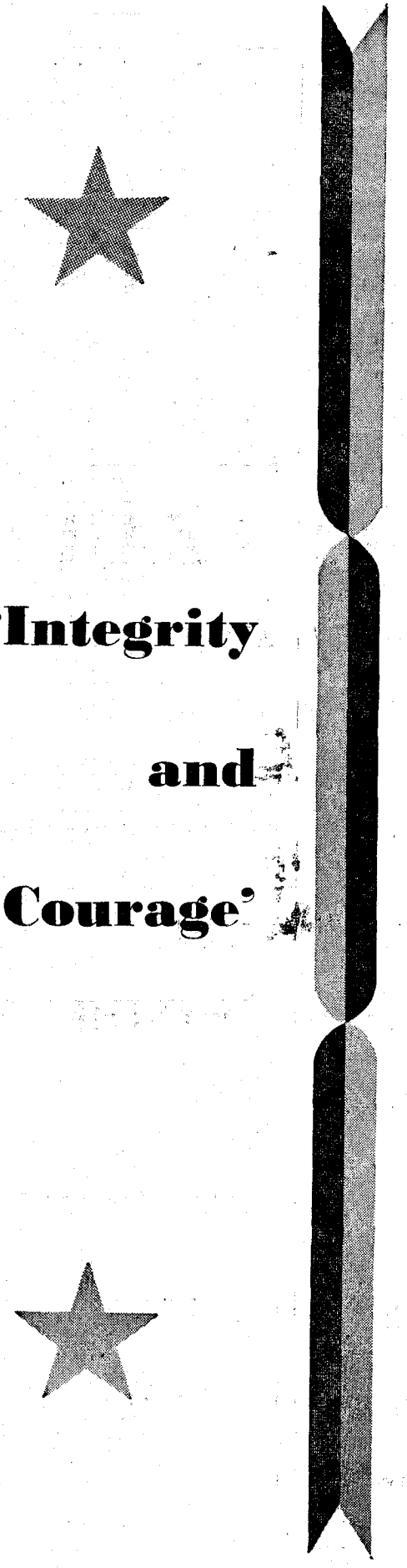

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